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Letter dated 18 April 2005 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, in your capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of April 2005, a letter dated 17 April 2005 from His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, to which are annexed the texts of the resolutions and the Algiers Declaration adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its seventeenth session at the summit level held on 22 and 23 March 2005, together with the final Communiqué issued at the session.

In accordance with Article 54 of the Charter of the United Nations, I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yahya **Mahmassani**
Ambassador
Head of Mission
New York

05-33604 (E) 250805

Annex to the letter dated 18 April 2005 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

17 April 2005

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a document containing the texts of the resolutions adopted and the final communiqué and Algiers Declaration issued by the Council of the League of Arab States at its seventeenth session at the summit level, held in Algiers on 22 and 23 March 2005. It contains a number of Arab conditions and resolutions on the most prominent current political issues, especially those relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the implementation of the Arab peace initiative and the evolving situation in Iraq. Also included are resolutions on development and modernization in Arab countries and United Nations reform, as well as a number of important resolutions relating to economic, social and developmental matters in Arab States. I should be grateful if you would have it distributed as a United Nations document.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm my desire for continued cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations, and my appreciation for your sincere efforts on behalf of Arab issues and the achievement of international peace and security.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Amre **Moussa**
Secretary-General

League of Arab States

LAS Secretariat
LAS Council Division
LAS Council Affairs Directorate

Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States
Seventeenth ordinary session
Algiers, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
22-23 March 2005

- Resolutions
- Final communiqué
- Algiers Declaration
- Remarks by His Excellency, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, at the opening meeting
- Remarks by Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, at the opening meeting
- List of the names of heads of the delegations of Arab States participating in the Summit.

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Resolutions

Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States
Seventeenth ordinary session
Algiers, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
22-23 March 2005

Report by the Presidency of the sixteenth ordinary Summit on the work of the Follow-up and Action Committee on the resolutions of the Tunis Summit

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having heard the remarks of Mr. Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia and President of the sixteenth ordinary summit-level session of the Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered the final report on the work of the Follow-up and Action Committee,

Having regard to resolution No. 293 concerning the establishment of a monitoring body on the implementation of resolutions and commitments, adopted on 23 March 2005 by the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States at its seventeenth ordinary session,

Decides:

1. To extend its thanks to the Chair and members of the Committee and the Secretary-General for their laudable efforts to follow up the implementation of the resolutions of the Tunis Summit of 2004;

2. That the President of the present Summit, the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, shall co-ordinate with the Secretary-General in convening a meeting of the monitoring body on the implementation of resolutions and commitments at the earliest possible occasion;

3. That that body shall monitor the implementation of resolutions and commitments and prepare draft Statutes, which shall be submitted for approval at the first ordinary or special ministerial-level session of the Council of the League, pursuant to resolution 293 concerning the establishment of the monitoring body adopted by the Summit-level Council of the League on 23 March 2005.

(Summit resolution 17/287, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered;

- The report by the Secretary-General dealing with the various fields of joint Arab action, including the process of developing and modernizing the Joint Arab Action system,

· The annex to the report by the Secretary-General dealing with progress to date in the development and modernization of the Arab region,

Decides:

1. To commend the report by the Secretary-General on the joint Arab action initiative, including the process of modernizing and developing the League of Arab States and enabling all its institutions to assume the Arab regional obligations incumbent upon them and to keep pace with regional and international innovations;

2. To express its appreciation for the steps taken by the Secretary-General pursuant to Summit resolutions, and to ask him to continue his efforts to that end.

(Summit resolution 17/288, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Current status of development and modernization in the Arab region

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

· The report by the Secretary-General on monitoring of the implementation of the Tunis Declaration, issued at the 2004 Tunis Summit, on the status of development and modernization in the Arab region,

· The report of the Follow-up and Action Committee on that same matter,

Having taken note of the efforts and achievements of Arab States in the area of reform and development grounded in the principles and bases set forth in the above-mentioned Tunis Summit Declaration,

Reaffirming its desire to pursue the path of reform in a context of specific mechanisms, programmes and plans,

Decides:

To ask the Secretary-General to continue to monitor activities tending to further progress and modernization in the Arab region in the light of reports to be submitted by Member States in accordance with the communiqué adopted at the sixteenth Summit held in Tunis in 2004, and to submit periodic reports on this matter to summit-level and ministerial-level meetings of the Council of the League.

(Summit resolution 17/289, adopted on 23 March 2995)

Development of the Joint Arab Action system: amendments to some articles of the Pact of the League of Arab States

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

· The note by the Secretariat,

· The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,

· The Pact of the League of Arab States and its annex concerning periodic summit-level meetings of the Council of the League,

Having regard to the provisions of articles XIX and XX of the Pact of the League of Arab States,

With a view to enabling the Joint Arab Action system to keep up with the accelerating pace of events and developments in the area of international relations and the development of systems applied in international and regional organizations,

Desiring to develop the Joint Arab Action system along lines conducive to the attainment of its stated objectives,

Having regard to its resolution 16/256, adopted at Tunis in 2004, concerning the amendment of the Pact and the development of the Joint Arab Action system,

Pursuant to resolution 6479 adopted on 13 January 2005 by the Ministerial-level Council of the League of Arab States at its extraordinary session on this matter, and resolution 6485 adopted on 3 March 2005 by the Ministerial-level Council at its one hundred and twenty-third ordinary session,

Decides:

I. To make the following amendments to the Pact of the League of Arab States:

Amendment 1:
A new article shall be added to the Pact, worded as follows:

An Arab Parliament shall be established in the framework of the League of Arab States, and its rules of procedure, composition, functions and areas of competence shall be defined.

Amendment 2:
Paragraph 2 of article VI of the Pact shall be amended to read as follows:

The Council shall by unanimous decision determine the measures necessary to repulse the aggression. In the event that this should prove impossible, the decision shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting. If the aggressor is a Member State, its vote shall not be counted in determining the majority.

Amendment 3:
The text of article VII of the Pact shall be replaced by the following:

1. The presence of two thirds of the number of Member States shall represent the quorum required for the validity of any session of the Council of the League, the Economic and Social Council, and any other ministerial councils functioning in the framework of the League.

2. Without prejudice to the provisions of article VI, paragraph 2 and article XVIII, paragraph 2, resolutions shall be adopted by consensus in so far as possible.

3. In the event that it should prove impossible to reach a consensus as contemplated in paragraph 2 above, the following procedure shall be adopted:

(a) The decision under consideration shall be postponed until the next session.

(b) Where the matter is of an urgent nature, an extraordinary session shall be convened within one month to deal with it.

(c) Where consensus cannot be achieved, the matter shall be put to a vote. The decision shall be deemed to have been adopted if two thirds of the States present vote in favour, in cases involving substantive issues.

(d) The decision shall be deemed to have been adopted by a simple majority of Member States present and voting, in other cases to which subparagraph (c) of this article is not applicable, having regard to the provisions of article V, paragraph 4 and those of article XVI of the Pact.

(e) The Statutes of the councils referred to in paragraph 1 of this article shall specify procedures for resorting to voting operations where a consensus cannot be reached.

II. These amendments shall come into force after ratification documents from a majority of Member States have been submitted to the Secretariat.

(Summit resolution 17/290, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Development of the Joint Arab Action system: definition of substantive questions and procedural questions concerning decisions

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat,
- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,
- Implementation measures taken by the Secretary-General in the process of monitoring the development and modernization of the Joint Arab Action system,

Having regard to its resolution 16/256, adopted at Tunis in 2004, concerning the amendment of the Pact of the League of Arab States in accordance with the provisions of articles XIX and XX of the Pact, resolution 6427 adopted on 14 September 2004 by the Ministerial-level Council at its one hundred and twenty-second ordinary session, resolution 6479 adopted on 13 January 2005 by the Ministerial-level Council at its extraordinary session on this matter, resolution 6485 adopted on 3 March 2005 by the Ministerial-level Council at its one hundred and twenty-third ordinary session, and resolution 6481 adopted on 9 February 2005 by the Permanent Delegate-level Council in this matter,

Decides:

To entrust the Ministerial-level Council of the League and the Secretariat with responsibility for defining substantive questions and procedural questions, and the matter of the obligation to implement decisions, at an extraordinary meeting to be convened before the end of the current year, in preparation for submitting a report on the matter to the Summit-level Council at its eighteenth ordinary session.

(Summit resolution 17/291, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Development of the Joint Arab Action system: establishment of an interim Arab Parliament

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat,

- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,

Having regard to the provisions of articles XIX and XX of the Pact of the League of Arab States,

Desiring to develop and modernize the institutions and bodies of the League,

Aware of the importance of the consultative principle and broad popular participation as a basis for democratic change,

Believing in the Arab peoples' aspirations to closer bonds between them, and seeking to contribute to the establishment of an Arab system that will realize the Arab community's hopes for socio-economic and political development, the rule of law and the strengthening of human rights, in pursuit of the realization of comprehensive Arab unity,

In response to the desire of the Arab peoples and their representative institutions to establish an Arab Parliament that will serve their interests and strengthen their solidarity,

Pursuant to resolution 16/256 on the development of the Joint Arab Action system, adopted at Tunis in 2004,

Pursuant also to resolution 6479 adopted on 13 January 2005 by the Council of the League of Arab States at its extraordinary session on this matter,

Decides:

1. To establish an interim Arab Parliament for a term of five years, which term may be extended for a maximum of two further years, counted from the date of its first meeting, as a transitional step toward the establishment of a permanent Arab Parliament. The interim Arab Parliament shall comprise four members for every State Member of the League of Arab States, and it shall function in accordance with the Statutes annexed to this resolution;

2. To entrust the Secretariat with responsibility for preparing an estimate of the anticipated financial costs associated with the interim Parliament, and for presenting it to the Ministerial-level meeting of the Council of the League at its next meeting;

3. The Secretary-General of the League shall convene the first session of the Parliament after its formation.

(Summit resolution 17/292, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Statutes of the interim Arab Parliament

Article 1

An Arab Parliament is established for a term of five years, which term may be extended for a maximum of two further years, counted from the date of its first meeting, as a transitional step toward the establishment of a permanent Arab Parliament. The interim Arab Parliament shall comprise four members for every State Member of the League of Arab States.

Article 2

The members of the interim Arab Parliament shall be appointed by the Legislative Assembly or similar body in each Member State, having due regard to the representation of women.

Article 3

The interim Arab Parliament shall have an independent budget, which shall be prepared and implemented in accordance with financial regulations and accounting procedures to be determined by the Parliament itself, subject to the provision that the resources at the Parliament's disposal during its interim stage shall be made up of equal contributions from Member States, in addition to such other resources as it may determine.

Article 4

Every national Parliament shall cover the costs and expenses of its representatives in the interim Arab Parliament.

Article 5

(a) The seat of the Arab Parliament shall be in the Syrian Arab Republic.

(b) The interim Parliament may decide to meet in another Arab State if invited to do so by one of the Member States.

Article 6

The Summit-level Council of the League shall set the date of the first session of the interim Parliament after its formation.

Article 7

The interim Parliament shall prepare its rules of procedure and shall establish its Bureau and committees.

Article 8

Before the end of its mandate, the interim Parliament shall prepare the Statutes of the permanent Arab Parliament, and those Statutes shall come into force after they have been approved by the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States.

Article 9

The interim Parliament shall exercise competence in the following areas:

(a) Consideration of means of strengthening inter-Arab relations in the framework of the Pact of the League and its various subsidiary organizations, and Arab pacts and agreements currently in effect.

(b) Discussion of matters of relevance for the strengthening of the Joint Arab Action system, the issue of opinions and recommendations in that connection, and devoting its attention to the challenges currently confronting the Arab region and the

development process in that region, especially with respect to economic and human development and economic integration in the Arab world.

(c) Discussion of questions referred to it by the Summit-level or Ministerial-level Council of the League or by the Secretary-General of the League and the issue of opinions thereon. The Parliament shall have the right to issue recommendations on such questions, and its recommendations shall be taken into consideration by the relevant Councils when adopting resolutions on the matters in question.

(d) Discussion of draft collective agreements among Arab States, where the Council of the League has referred such an agreement to the interim Parliament.

(e) Establishment of relations of co-operation with Parliamentary unions and international, regional and national Parliaments, with a view to promoting the interests of the Arab world and security, peace and stability in the region.

(f) Approval of the interim Parliament's budget and final account.

(g) Cognizance of the annual budget of the League of Arab States.

(h) Adoption of the rules of procedure of the interim Parliament.

Article 10

(a) The interim Parliament shall meet in regular session not less than twice yearly for periods to be set forth in the rules of procedure. Its year-end session shall not rise until it has discussed and approved its budget.

(b) Meetings of the interim Parliament shall be open except where the Parliament decides to hold closed meetings.

Article 11

(a) Members of the interim Parliament shall perform their duties freely and independently.

(b) The seat of the interim Parliament shall enjoy such immunities and privileges as may be stated in the Parliamentary Seat Agreement concluded between the Parliament and the host country.

Article 12

The interim Parliament shall have a Secretariat headed by a Secretary-General. The rules of procedure of the interim Parliament shall specify the functions and conditions of appointment of the Secretary-General and his assistants, and the Secretariat's areas of competence.

Development of the Joint Arab Action system: establishment of a monitoring body on the implementation of resolutions and commitments

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat,
- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,
- The Pact of the League of Arab States,

Having regard to the provisions of articles XIX and XX of the Pact of the League of Arab States,

Pursuant to the commitment and solidarity agreement among the leaders of Arab States,

Believing that attainment of the objectives of the Pact of the League is contingent on compliance with and implementation of its resolutions at all levels,

Having regard to its resolution 16/256, adopted at Tunis in 2004, concerning the amendment of the Pact and the development of the Joint Arab Action system,

Pursuant to resolution 6484 on this matter, adopted on 3 March 2005 by the Ministerial-level Council of the League of Arab States at its one hundred and twenty-third ordinary session,

Reaffirming the importance of the commitment of Member States to implement the decisions of the League,

Decides:

1. To establish a monitoring body on the implementation of resolutions and the fulfilment of commitments;

2. That the body shall be made up of two representatives from the States Members of the Troika of the Summit-level Council of the League (past presidency, current presidency and next presidency) and two representatives from the States Members of the Troika of the Foreign Ministers-level Council of the League (past presidency, current presidency and next presidency), with the participation of the Secretary-General;

3. The body shall monitor Member States' fulfilment of their commitments as set forth in the Pact or arising from resolutions adopted by the Summit-level Council of the League;

4. The Ministerial-level Council of the League shall adopt the Statutes of the monitoring body at its first ordinary or extraordinary session. The Statutes shall specify the monitoring body's working methods and operating procedures.

(Summit resolution 17/293, adopted on 23 March 2005).

Development of the Joint Arab Action system: further study of the proposed Arab Court of Justice and Arab Security Council

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat,
- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,
- The practical steps taken by the Secretary-General in the process of following up the development and modernization of the Joint Arab Action system,

Having regard to its decision 16/256, adopted at Tunis in 2004, concerning the amendment of the Pact of the League of Arab States in accordance with the provisions of articles XIX and XX of the Pact, resolution 6427 adopted on 14

September 2004 by the Ministerial-level Council at its one hundred and twenty-second ordinary session, and resolution 6479 adopted on 13 January 2005 by the Ministerial-level Council at its extraordinary session on this matter,

In the light of the discussion and delegations' remarks and suggestions,

Decides:

To ask the Secretary-General to establish specialized committees with two representatives from Member States to pursue consideration of the proposed Arab Court of Justice and the proposed Arab Security Council and other suggestions put forward by Member States, with a view to presenting their recommendations to the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States at its eighteenth ordinary session in March 2006.

(Summit resolution 17/294, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Development of the Joint Arab Action system: development of the Economic and Social Council

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The report of the Economic and Social Council on the measures it has taken to implement resolution 16/280 adopted at the Tunis Summit on 23 May 2004,
- The measures taken by some Arab States to ratify the amendment to article VIII, paragraph 1 of the Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty,

Expressing its appreciation for the Economic and Social Council's efforts in this connection, including in particular participation by civil society institutions in its work and that of Ministerial Councils working in the framework of the League,

Decides:

1. To invite those Arab States that have not yet ratified the amendment to article VIII, paragraph 1 of the Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty to act without delay to complete ratification procedures and deposit their ratification documents with the Secretariat of the League of Arab States;

2. To invite the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Arab Monetary Fund to cooperate with the Secretariat in preparing a draft joint Arab economic and social action strategy and submitting it to the Economic and Social Council;

3. To place social matters of relevance for the "socio-economic issue" on the agenda of the Summit-level Council of the League, taking into account the contributions of Arab Ministerial Councils and organizations concerned with the social sector, as presented through the Economic and Social Council. For purposes of the presentation of such matters, the same criteria shall be applied as those which the Council has adopted with respect to all matters presented at summit level.

(Summit resolution 17/295, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Development of the Joint Arab Action system: development of the action of specialized Arab organizations and Ministerial Councils

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The report of the Economic and Social Council on its implementation of resolution 16/279 adopted on 23 May 2004,
- The evaluation studies prepared by the legislative councils of specialized Arab organizations, containing their suggestions concerning development of the action of those organizations,

Reaffirming its determination to strengthen Joint Arab Action institutions and agencies and further enhance their performance, with a view to enabling them to keep pace with economic and social change,

Expressing its desire and determination for those organizations to be able to meet the needs of Arab States, each in its area of competence, and to support the process of socio-economic development in Arab States in particular;

Commending the specialized Ministerial Councils that have evaluated and made suggestions for the development of their action,

Decides:

To entrust the Economic and Social Council with responsibility for preparing a comprehensive report containing its suggestions in the matter of development of the action of specialized Arab organizations and Ministerial Councils, in the light of the evaluation studies conducted by the legislative councils of those organizations, that report to be submitted to the Summit-level Council of the League at its next session in 2006.

(Summit resolution 17/296, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Ideas presented at the 2001 Amman summit by Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, Leader of the Great 1 September Revolution

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered the steps taken by the ministerial committee established to consider this topic, which are contained in the Secretariat's report on the matter,

Having heard the presentation by Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, Leader of the Great 1 September Revolution, at the Algiers Summit in 2005,

Decides:

1. To renew the mandate of the ministerial committee established to consider the ideas presented by Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, Leader of the Great 1 September Revolution, at the Amman Summit in 2001, to ask it to complete its task without delay pursuant to the resolution adopted at the Amman summit in the matter, and to make the necessary financial resources available;

2. To present the committee's work to the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States at an extraordinary session to be held in Cairo.

(Summit resolution 17/297, adopted on 23 March 2005)

The Arab-Israeli conflict:

(a) Reaffirmation of the Arab peace initiative

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat, and

- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,

Recalling the resolution adopted at the extraordinary Arab Summit Conference in Cairo in June 1996, to the effect that a just, comprehensive peace was a strategic option for the Arab States that could be realized in a context of international legality and would require a corresponding commitment on the part of Israel,

Reaffirming resolution 221 adopted on 28 March 2002 at the Beirut Summit, endorsing the Arab peace initiative, which the Council deems to be fundamental to a peaceful, just, comprehensive, lasting settlement in the region,

Emphasizing the international acclaim that greeted the Arab peace initiative, which has been prevented from being translated into concrete reality on the ground only by Israel's refusal, the pursuit of its aggressive policy against the Palestinian people and its threat to the States of the region,

Noting resolution 259(a) adopted at the Tunis Summit in May 2004, which reaffirmed the Council's commitment to the Arab peace initiative and its rejection of positions incompatible with international legality and the terms of reference of the peace process,

Relying on international determination to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region,

Decides:

1. To affirm once again that the Arab peace initiative is an Arab project for achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region and has won wide international acclaim;

2. To reaffirm that the peace process has been established on a basis of international legality, including United Nations resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, and consequently no authority of any kind has the right to alter it in any way for purposes of evading the commitments associated with it, renouncing it, or going back on duly signed agreements in that connection;

3. To reject positions that are incompatible with the international legal bases and terms of reference of the peace process, as set forth in the two letters exchanged between the Prime Minister of Israel and the President of the United States of America, including efforts to pre-empt the outcomes of negotiations on final status questions;

4. To reaffirm that the peace process is an integral whole, and that the just, comprehensive and lasting peace to which the peoples of the region aspire can come about only through the restitution of Arab rights, entire and undiminished, to those who are entitled to them, including in particular a withdrawal by Israel from all occupied Arab territories in Palestine, the Golan and southern Lebanon to the lines

of 4 June 1967, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on its national land, having East Jerusalem as its capital, a just, agreed solution to the Palestinian refugee problem in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 194 of 1948, and rejection of all forms of Palestinian settlement that are inconsistent with the principles of international law and the situation prevailing in the Arab host countries;

5. To pursue efforts, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 7 of resolution 221 adopted at the Beirut Summit concerning approval of the Arab peace initiative, to secure the adoption of a resolution by the United Nations Security Council or General Assembly endorsing the Arab peace initiative as a framework for a peaceful solution;

6. To entrust the Committee on the Arab Peace Initiative with responsibility for consulting with the Quartet Committee and convening a joint meeting with it for the purpose of taking the necessary measures to further progress toward a settlement in the Arab-Israeli conflict;

7. To invite the ministerial-level Arab Peace Initiative Committee, chaired by the President of the current summit session, to co-ordinate with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States in endeavouring to promote the action plan that has been placed in the international arena with a view to implementing the initiative, and to submit reports to the ministerial-level Council of the League on its work and the results it has achieved;

8. By way of supplementing the action plan prepared by the Arab Peace Initiative Committee, to ask the Secretary-General to consult with the members of the Committee for the purpose of preparing a plan for the implementation of paragraph 5 of the Initiative.

(Summit resolution 17/298(a), adopted on 23 March 2005)

The Arab-Israeli conflict:

(b) Activation of the Arab peace initiative

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat, and

- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,

Having reviewed international efforts to revive the peace process,

Decides:

1. To reaffirm the Arab peace initiative as approved at the 2002 Beirut Summit, which called upon Israel to withdraw fully from the occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan, to the line of 4 June 1967, and from the territories in southern Lebanon that are still occupied, to accept the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital, to arrive at a just, agreed solution to the Palestinian refugee problem in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 194, and to guarantee the rejection of all forms of Palestinian

resettlement, all in accordance with international legality, the principle of land for peace and the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, whereupon the Arab States will consider the Arab-Israeli conflict at an end and will establish normal relations with Israel in the framework of a comprehensive peace;

2. To invite the international community and all its constituent States and organizations to support and implement this initiative;

3. To entrust the ministerial-level Arab Peace Initiative Committee with responsibility for taking immediate action to activate the initiative by various means, including consultation with the Quartet Committee.

(Summit resolution 17/298(b), adopted on 23 March 2005)

The Arab-Israeli conflict:

(c) Developments in the Palestinian issue

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered the resolutions of the Ministerial-level Council and the report of the Secretary-General,

In the light of Israel's consistent refusal to comply with internationally binding resolutions, its persistent violation of the basic provisions of international humanitarian law, its continuing aggression against the Palestinian people and its institutions, its intensification of settlement activities, its continued building of the apartheid wall and its plans to Judaize Jerusalem,

Reaffirming its solidarity with the Palestinian people and its support for their struggle to recover their inalienable lawful rights,

Reiterating its previous resolutions on support for the Palestinian economy,

Having considered the two letters exchanged between the President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister of Israel, which were announced on 14 April 2004, and the Israeli disengagement plan,

Taking into account political developments since the last Summit,

Decides:

1. That an essential prerequisite for the realization of a Palestinian-Israeli settlement is a guarantee of a just solution to all aspects of the Palestine issue on the basis of international law, internationally binding instruments and agreed terms of reference, as exemplified in the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principles of land for peace and the inadmissibility of acquiring others' land by force, which converge to indicate that the Palestinian people must be enabled to achieve its national independence and exercise sovereignty in its State of Palestine, having East Jerusalem as its capital;

2. That peace between Palestinians and Israelis can come about only through a two-State solution based on the 1967 borders, a just and agreed solution to the problem of the refugees in accordance with United Nations resolution 194, and security for both sides;

3. To commit itself to the Arab peace initiative and the road map plan, and to reject all positions that are incompatible with the bases of international legality and the terms of reference of the peace process, including efforts to pre-empt the outcome of final status negotiations;

4. To ask all States and international organizations not to recognize or deal with any guarantees or promises likely to have the result of diminishing the lawful rights of the Palestinian people and rewarding the Israeli occupation, which seeks to impose its conditions through a policy of fait accompli;

5. To ask the Quartet Committee to renew its assiduous efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of the Arab peace initiative and implementation of the road map, and to reaffirm that any measures taken by any party must be taken in the context of efforts to implement those two plans;

6. To regard the agreements reached at the recent Sharm el Sheikh Summit as an initial step toward implementation of the road map, one that must be followed by practical measures to translate those agreements into genuine, credible facts on the ground, leading to the rapid implementation of the following stages of the road map, including all negotiation tracks, with a view to reaching a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region; and to express its appreciation for the efforts of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan at the Sharm el Sheikh Summit;

7. To welcome the outcomes of the dialogue with Palestinian groups held recently in Cairo, and to support the Palestinian national dialogue and the unified Palestinian positions in the matter of the truce and mutual cease-fire; in that connection, to support the position that civilians shall not be targeted in Israel, and to accept a halt to all forms of military action and acts of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories on a mutual basis between the two sides, while reaffirming that the Palestinian people, like other peoples, has a fundamental right to resist occupation and to defend itself;

8. To reaffirm that any Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank must be complete and must take place in the framework of the road map, as the beginning of its full implementation, and that this calls for the taking of similar steps in the other parts of the West Bank; to reaffirm the unity and territorial integrity of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the unacceptability of alterations to the legal status of even a single part of that territory; and to reaffirm, conversely, the necessity of reaching agreement on the final form of a solution and comprehensive settlement;

9. To offer renewed condolences to the entire Palestinian people on the death of its leader, the late President Yasir Arafat, and to call upon all to rally round his heritage of struggle and the national values that he defined; to commend the ability that the Palestinian people has shown in coming through its hour of trial and successfully holding democratic presidential elections; and to congratulate President Mahmoud Abbas on his election as President of the Palestinian National Authority;

10. To reaffirm the Arab nature of Jerusalem and the illegitimacy of Israeli measures aimed at incorporating it, Judaizing it and altering its nature and its demographic and geographic structure; to condemn the erection of the wall known as the "Jerusalem envelope", the aim of which is to cut off Jerusalem and isolate its

Palestinian inhabitants from their natural hinterland in the West Bank; and to condemn also the excavations which have resulted in the collapse of the bridge leading to the Bab al-Maghariba and are endangering the foundations of the Al-Aqsa Mosque;

11. Strongly to condemn the continuing construction by Israel, the Occupying Power, of the expansionist wall on occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem; to reaffirm the importance of challenging the building of the wall and the destructive impacts resulting therefrom upon the Palestinian people, its land, its water and its boundaries, and of stopping the work of construction and tearing down the existing parts; to reaffirm, once again, its condemnation of the continuing colonization of Palestinian land by illegal settlement activities in all their forms, and to reaffirm the necessity of putting a stop to those activities immediately;

12. To reaffirm the transcendent importance of the legal finding of the International Court of Justice and the necessity of observing the legally binding obligations arising therefrom upon Israel, the Occupying Power, the States Members of the United Nations, and the international organization itself; in the same connection, to commend the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session, including its invitation to Switzerland to take appropriate action in its capacity as the depositary of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and its request to the Secretary-General to set up a register of damage resulting from the wall;

13. To call upon the General Assembly and the Security Council to follow up the decision of the International Court of Justice by ensuring fulfilment of the legal obligations determined by the Court, and to call upon the Assembly and Council and all States to impose sanctions against commercial firms and agencies that participate in the construction of the wall, against the settlers and products produced in settlements, and all bodies that profit from any activities on occupied Palestinian land, including East Jerusalem;

14. To support the initiative of the non-aligned movement for the holding of a conference of regional organizations to support action aimed at bringing about a Palestinian-Israeli settlement, the said conference to be held in New York shortly before the meeting of the General Assembly;

15. To entrust the Committee on the Arab Peace Initiative with responsibility for monitoring the situation in the light of these efforts and any new developments, and to take any necessary measures in that connection, including preparations for a meeting of the Security Council in response to a collective Arab request in the event the hoped-for progress does not eventuate, in accordance with the above paragraphs concerned with these matters.

(Summit resolution 17/298(c), adopted on 23 March 2005)

The Arab-Israeli conflict:

(d) Financial support for the budget of the Palestinian National Authority and support for the tenacity of the Palestinian people and its economy

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The difficult situation that the Palestinian people continue to experience as a result of Israel's harsh blockade and aggression, especially during the past five years;

- The serious deterioration occurring in the Palestinian economy, which a World Bank report has described as one of the worst situations in contemporary history,

Reaffirming the importance of the obligation of paying contributions due from Member States to support the budget of the Palestinian National Authority in accordance with resolutions adopted at the Arab Summits held in Beirut, Sharm el Sheikh and Tunis,

Reaffirming its previous resolutions concerning support for the Palestinian economy,

Decides:

1. To thank those Arab States that have fulfilled or partially fulfilled their obligations pursuant to previous Arab Summits, and to call upon those States that have not fulfilled their obligations to do so without delay; to entrust the Secretariat with responsibility for monitoring this matter and continuing to issue a monthly report indicating the status of contributions; and to inform the appropriate authorities in Member States and urge them to make their contributions in a timely manner;

2. To invite Arab States to continue to support the budget of the Palestinian National Authority in accordance with the resolutions to that effect adapted at previous Arab Summits, through the same mechanisms, for a period of six months beginning on 1 April 2005;

3. To thank Arab States that have paid their contributions to the Al-Aqsa Fund, the Intifadah Fund and the supplementary support fund, and to call upon other Arab States to pay their arrears as quickly as possible;

4. To express its appreciation for the Secretariat's efforts to implement resolutions 16/260 and 16/274 adopted at the Tunis Summit in 2004, on financial support for the budget of the Palestinian National Authority, the tenacity of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian economy, and also its appreciation for the role played by Arab Funds and financial and economic institutions and the Joint Arab Action system, and calls upon them to intensify their efforts and their financial and technical assistance programmes to strengthen the economic and institutional capacities of the Palestinian people;

5. To offer its thanks and esteem to Arab peoples and other fraternal peoples whose support and solidarity have been of inestimable assistance to the Palestinian people and have helped many Palestinian families to supply their basic needs and enabled them to hold out in the face of Israel's destructive aggression and blockade; to invite Arab popular institutions, charitable associations and individuals to continue and strengthen that support and enhance its effectiveness by structuring the flow, coordinating the channels through which it is provided and planning the uses to which it is put; to reaffirm the importance of continued popular contributions from institutions and individuals to support the steadfastness of the Palestinian

people; and to ask the Secretariat to continue to open accounts in the banks of the several Arab States for that purpose;

6. To thank Arab States that have issued timely instructions to their customs control points and opened their markets to the free flow of products of Palestinian origin, exonerating them from customs duties and taxes having a similar effect, pursuant to Arab resolutions in the matter, and to ask Arab States that have not given effect to resolution 200 adopted on 22 October 2000 at the Cairo extraordinary session on the same matter to do so without delay;

7. To invite Arab States to support the reconstruction of houses in Palestine that have been destroyed by the Israeli occupation, in order to provide shelter for families that have thereby been made homeless, and also to support an Arab housing project in Gaza and one in the West Bank;

8. To welcome the initiative of the international community in deciding to hold a meeting in London early in March 2005 to support the Palestinian National Authority, and to commend the readiness and determination of international donor agencies to provide all forms of aid for the building and development of official and popular Palestinian institutions;

9. To express its appreciation of the effort being made by the Secretariat and the Islamic Development Bank, which manages the Al-Aqsa Fund and the Al-Quds Intifadah Fund, to muster Arab aid, coordinate its mechanisms, and to rationalize its uses with a view to enhancing its developmental effectiveness and enabling it to make a greater contribution to the laying of the foundations of a viable independent Palestinian State.

(Summit resolution 17/298(d), adopted on 23 March 2005)

The Arab-Israeli conflict:

(e) The occupied Syrian Arab Golan

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat, and
- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,

Recalling the resolutions of Arab Summits and of the Ministerial-level Council on the occupied Syrian Arab Golan,

Reaffirming previous resolutions in the matter,

Decides:

1. To reaffirm Arab States' firm and unswerving support for Syria's just claim and its right to the restitution of the whole of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan up to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the principles of the peace process, legally binding United Nations resolutions and the outcome of negotiations held after the 1991 Madrid Conference;

2. To reaffirm, once again, its rejection of all measures taken by the Israeli occupation authorities with a view to altering the legal, natural and demographic

status of the occupied Syrian Golan, to regard Israeli measures aimed at consolidating its control over it as unlawful and null and void, constituting a violation of international agreements, the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 497(1981) and General Assembly resolution 59/33, adopted at its fifty-ninth session on 1 December 2004, which declared that the Israeli decision of 14 December 1981 to annex the occupied Syrian Arab Golan was null and void and of no legal validity, and constituted a grave violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981);

3. To reaffirm, once again, that the continued occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan, which has been occupied since 1967, constitutes a constant threat to peace and security in the region and in the world.

4. To condemn Israel for its practices in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, including in particular the seizure of land and water resources, the building and expansion of settlements and the transfer of settlers to them, the exploitation of the area's natural resources and the construction of projects upon them, and the imposition of an economic embargo and export ban on the agricultural products of the Golan's Arab inhabitants;

5. To reaffirm the Arab position of full solidarity with Syria and Lebanon and alignment with them in confronting the constant Israeli attacks and threats against them; to regard any attack on them as an attack on the Arab nation; and to condemn the economic sanctions imposed upon Syria;

6. To support the steadfast endurance of the Arab residents of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and align itself with them in their opposition to Israel's occupation and repressive practices and their perseverance in clinging to their land and their Syrian Arab identity; to reaffirm the essential applicability of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention to the citizens of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan; to condemn the Israeli occupation authorities' flagrant violations of all the rights of Syrian citizens living under occupation, old and young alike, heedless of the principles of international law and the bases of international legitimacy, and the results of that occupation in the form of the migration and expulsion of thousands of people, the theft of their lands and the separation of families, a situation which is reflected in the lives and education of children; and to condemn as well numerous other violations in the area of the rights of children, in contravention of international obligations arising from the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

7. To uphold United Nations resolutions requiring that any situation created by Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Arab territories should not be recognized on the grounds that it is unlawful and gives rise to no rights or obligations, that the building of settlements and the introduction of settlers is in serious violation of the Geneva Conventions, constitutes a war crime under Additional Protocol I to the Conventions and is in breach of the principles of the peace process, and that there must therefore be a halt to all Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and the occupied Arab territories;

8. To urge the international community to uphold legally binding United Nations resolutions rejecting Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan by condemning the practices of the Israel Government announced on 31 December 2003, viz. the establishment of nine new settlements, the expansion of existing settlements, a great increase in the number of settlers in them and approval

of the necessary budget allocations for that purpose, rebuffing peaceful Arab and international orientations aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region, in accordance with legally binding United Nations resolutions and the Arab peace initiative as adopted at the Beirut Summit in 2002;

9. To condemn the policy of the Government of Israel that has destroyed the peace process and has led to a constant escalation of tension in the region; to urge the international community, and especially the co-sponsors of the Madrid peace conference and the European Union, to induce Israel to comply with the United Nations resolutions relating to its full withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and from all the occupied Palestinian territories, to the line of 4 June 1967, and to respond to repeated calls from Syria, which have met with international approbation, for a resumption of peace negotiations from the point at which they were broken off.

(Summit resolution 17/298(e), adopted on 23 March 2005)

The Arab-Israeli conflict:

(f) Solidarity with and support for Lebanon

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat,

- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,

Recalling the resolutions of previous Arab summit conferences on solidarity with and support for Lebanon, the most recent of them being resolution 262 adopted on 23 May 2004 at the Tunis Summit, and noting the latest domestic and internal developments relating to Lebanon,

Decides:

1. To condemn Israel in the strongest terms for its continued occupation of Lebanese territory and positions along Lebanon's borders, for its continued detention of Lebanese citizens in its prisons, for its failure to hand over to the United Nations all the maps showing the locations of landmines laid by its occupying forces, and for its ongoing violations of Lebanese sovereignty on land, at sea and in the air, and to denounce Israeli acts of aggression against Lebanon and Syria and regard any attacks against them as aggression against all the Arab States;

2. To support Lebanon in its sovereign right to exercise its political options in the framework of its constitutional principles and institutions, and to support its free decision to establish and strengthen fraternal relations, co-ordination and co-operation with fellow Arab States, taking into account historical relations, especially between Syria and Lebanon;

3. To reaffirm its desire for Arab States to support political, economic and security-related stability in the fraternal country of Lebanon, to reject the pressures being brought to bear on it, and to condemn Israeli acts of aggression against its sovereignty and independence;

4. To affirm support for Lebanon:

(a) In completing the liberation of its territory, including the Shab'a Farms, from Israeli occupation up to the internationally recognized boundaries in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), while retaining its right to resist such occupation by all legitimate means;

(b) In its demand for the release of Lebanese prisoners and detainees held in Israeli prisons as hostages in violation of the norms of international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Hague Convention of 1907, and in exercising its right to liberate these prisoners by all legitimate means;

(c) In its request to the Security Council to assume its responsibilities by taking immediate action to demand that Israel desist from its threats directed against Lebanon, its violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and its incursions into Lebanese territory, airspace and territorial waters, and requiring it to assume responsibility for this aggressive attitude and the adverse impacts resulting therefrom on the security and stability of the region;

(d) In its demand for the removal of the hundreds of thousands of landmines that the Israeli occupation has left behind, on the understanding that Israel must bear responsibility for their placement and for the civilian deaths and injuries that they cause;

(e) In asserting its right to its territorial waters in accordance with international law and in opposition to Israeli ambitions;

(f) In condemning Israel's constant acts of aggression and violations of the Blue Line, especially as regards Lebanese civilians affected by such actions on the part of the occupation forces as the bombing of Lebanese villages and towns in the southern part of the country;

5. To call upon the international community and international judicial and political entities:

(a) To bring pressure to bear on Israel to compensate Lebanon for the losses and damage caused by its repeated incursions into Lebanese territory before, during and since the time of the occupation;

(b) To enable delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross and representatives of other humanitarian organizations to visit all Lebanese detainees on an ongoing basis and to assess their condition and provide them with medical care;

(c) To endeavour to have the United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopt a resolution that will make it possible to investigate cases where detainees have died in Israeli detention camps so that compensation can be paid to injured parties in accordance with international and the relevant conventions;

6. To affirm the right of return of the Palestine refugees to their homes; and to warn that any failure to resolve the case of those residing in Lebanon on the basis of their return to their homes pursuant to General Assembly resolution 194 (1948), in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principles of international law, and any attempt at their resettlement will undermine security and stability in the region and impede the achievement of a just peace;

7. To thank the Member States and Arab funds that have provided the Lebanese Government with aid and financial assistance; to request the remaining Member States to meet their commitments given at Arab summit conferences for support for Lebanon and for the steadfastness of its people and its reconstruction;

8. To reaffirm its condemnation of State terrorism, which Arab States are helping effectively to combat, and to reject attempts to include resistance in terrorism statutes, on the grounds that a distinction must be drawn between terrorism and legitimate resistance to Israeli occupation; and to affirm the need for an international conference to be convened under the auspices of the United Nations to consider terrorism and develop an international counter-terrorism convention that incorporates a precise definition of the phenomenon and differentiates between it and the legitimate right of peoples to resist foreign occupation.

(Summit resolution 17/298(f), adopted on 23 March 2005)

The evolving situation in Iraq

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat,
- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,
- The results of the work of the Arab Troika Committee,

Having regard to resolution 16/264 adopted at the Tunis Summit on 23 May 2004,

Reaffirming resolutions 6324 and 2325 adopted on 9 September 2003 by the Ministerial-level Council of the League at its one hundred and twentieth ordinary session, resolution 6377 adopted by the Council at its one hundred and twenty-first ordinary session, resolution 6437 adopted by the Council at its one hundred and twenty-second ordinary session and resolution 6494 adopted on 3 March 2005 by the Council at its one hundred and twenty-third ordinary session,

Welcoming the recommendations adopted by the international conference convened by the Arab Republic of Egypt in the city of Sharm el Sheikh on 22 and 23 November 2004 to consider the matter of Iraq,

Having heard the presentation made by the head of the delegation of the Republic of Iraq,

After discussion and debate,

Decides:

1. To affirm that the unity, sovereignty and independence of Iraq must be respected, without interference in its internal affairs, and that the will of the Iraqi people and its choices in determining its own future, as expressed in the recent elections, must be respected;

2. To welcome the electoral process that took place in Iraq on 30 January 2005, deeming it a great achievement of the Iraqi people on the road to a peaceful and democratic transfer of power and a fundamental step on the road to completion

of the political process of establishing a democratic constitutional system in Iraq; and to express its esteem for the efforts made by the Government of Iraq in that connection;

3. To affirm the necessity of participation by all segments of the Iraqi people in the political process taking place in Iraq, including in particular the drafting of a permanent Constitution based on national consensus, the holding of a referendum thereon, and participation in the legislative elections scheduled for December 2005; and to call for support for the interim Iraqi Government that will emerge from the National Assembly in its efforts to combat terrorism and violence and to promote the establishment of security and stability in the country;

4. To welcome all initiatives, and in particular the initiative undertaken by the Iraqi Government, aimed at promoting a comprehensive national dialogue; and to urge all political forces and all segments and components of the Iraqi people to participate in that dialogue;

5. To welcome the role that has been assumed by the United Nations in supporting the electoral process in Iraq; and to affirm the importance of its assumption of a central role in the completion of the political process and in reconstruction efforts;

6. To affirm the importance of strengthening the role of the League of Arab States in Iraq, inasmuch as Iraq is a founding member of the League, and the importance of continued cooperation and coordination with the United Nations to provide Iraq with all forms of assistance in various sectors, including in particular the political process and reconstruction;

7. To affirm the importance of the Arab presence in Iraq, including the restoration of diplomatic relations with Iraq to their natural level, to support the political effort currently being made by the interim Iraqi Government in that connection;

8. To call upon all governmental and non-governmental institutions, funds and financial institutions to contribute effectively and actively to the reconstruction of Iraq;

9. To condemn all acts of terrorism and violence in Iraq that target civilians, security officers, police, members of the Iraqi armed forces or humanitarian, religious or civilian institutions, and all abductions of persons working for commercial firms or international or humanitarian organizations operating in Iraq where such organizations are contributing to reconstruction of the country and providing assistance to the Iraqi people; and to condemn acts of terrorism directed against diplomats and journalists;

10. To condemn the grave violations of human rights that occurred during the occupation of the State of Kuwait and the destruction of data relating to prisoners and missing persons of Kuwaiti and other nationalities, the bodies of a number of whom were found in mass graves; to express its deepest sympathy to the families of victims whose remains have been identified and distress at the ordeal of the families of those whose fate in unknown; and to demand that every effort be made to discover the fate of all missing persons and prisoners of Kuwaiti and other nationalities;

11. To provide assistance in various fields to enable the Republic of Iraq to carry the political process to its conclusion and draft its Constitution; to provide training and skills development for Iraqis, including training for police and the armed forces, with a view to qualifying them to take up their duties in all parts of the country without delay, thereby enabling the Iraqi Government to terminate the foreign military presence in accordance with Security Council resolution 1546 (2004) and resolution 16/264 adopted at the 2004 Tunis Summit;

12. To welcome the commitments undertaken by Iraq's creditor States, including the members of the Paris Club, to reduce Iraq's indebtedness to them by 80 per cent; to call upon those States to take practical measures to continue to reduce those debts; and to urge Arab creditor States to act without delay to forgive or reduce Iraq's indebtedness to them, in accordance with the decision of the Paris Club, as an effective means of helping to support Iraq's economy and furthering its recovery through development programmes for the benefit and prosperity of the Iraqi people.

(Summit resolution 17/299, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Occupation by Iran of the three Arab islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates in the Arabian Gulf, namely the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat,
- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,

Guided by the resolutions of previous summits, the most recent of them being resolution 16/265 adopted at the Tunis Summit on 23 May 2004 on the occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of three Arab islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates in the Arabian Gulf, namely the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa,

Reaffirming the resolutions adopted by the Ministerial-level Council of the League on this matter, the most recent of them being resolution 6495 adopted on 3 March 2005,

Decides:

1. To express its unconditional affirmation of the full sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands, namely the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and its support for all the peaceful measures and actions being taken by the United Arab Emirates with a view to restoring its sovereignty over the occupied islands;

2. To denounce the Iranian Government's persistence in perpetuating its occupation of the three islands and violating the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates, thereby undermining security and stability in the region and posing a threat to international peace and security;

3. To condemn the construction by the Iranian Government of housing for the settlement of Iranians on the three occupied Arab islands;

4. To condemn the Iranian military exercises that extend to the three occupied islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, namely the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, as well as to the country's territorial waters, its airspace, the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone of the three islands as an integral part of the United Arab Emirates; and to ask Iran to desist from committing such violations and engaging in provocative actions that are to be regarded as interference in the internal affairs of an independent, sovereign State, are unhelpful for the process of building confidence, pose a threat to security and stability in the region, and endanger the security and safety of intra-regional and international shipping in the Arabian Gulf;

5. To invite the Iranian Government to abandon, once and for all, its proposed construction of a monument on the Island of Abu Musa belonging to the United Arab Emirates and occupied by the Islamic Republic of Iran, deeming the project to constitute an alteration of the island's status, a violation of its historical and cultural characteristics, and an infringement of the rights and sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates; and to affirm that the building of such a monument is altogether unhelpful in terms of resolving the dispute between the two countries and likely to jeopardize their hopes of settling their differences by peaceful means;

6. To renew its calls to the Iranian Government: to end its occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates; to refrain from imposing a fait accompli by force; to desist from building installations in the islands for the purpose of altering their demographic composition; to revoke all measures taken and remove all installations put in place unilaterally by Iran in the three Arab islands, given that such actions and claims are null and void, have no legal effect, cannot diminish the established right of the United Arab Emirates to the three islands and are incompatible with the norms of international law and the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1949; and to pursue peaceful means to resolve the existing dispute over the islands in accordance with principles and norms of international law, including agreement to refer the case to the International Court of Justice;

7. To express the hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran will reconsider its position of refusing to seek a peaceful solution to the issue of the three occupied islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates either through direct negotiations in good faith or by referral to the International Court of Justice;

8. To call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to translate into practical and concrete measures, both in word and in deed, its declared desire for improved relations with Arab States, for dialogue and for the elimination of tension, and to do so by responding candidly to the earnest and sincere calls issued by the United Arab Emirates, the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Arab States, international groups, friendly States and the Secretary-General of the United Nations for a peaceful settlement to the dispute over the three occupied islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates in accordance with the relevant conventions and covenants and the norms of international law, to be reached through direct negotiations or by referral to the International Court of Justice, in order to build confidence and strengthen security and stability in the Arabian Gulf region;

9. To undertake, in the contacts maintained by all Arab States with the Islamic Republic of Iran, to raise the issue of Iran's occupation of the three Arab islands in order to stress that that occupation must be ended, given that the three islands are occupied Arab territory;

10. To notify the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the Security Council of the importance of ensuring that the question is retained on the list of items of which the Security Council is seized until such time as Iran ends its occupation of the three Arab islands and the United Arab Emirates regains full sovereignty over them;

11. To request the Secretary-General of the League to monitor the situation and submit a report on the matter to the Council at its next ordinary session.

(Summit resolution 17/300, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Coercive measures against the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya because of the dispute concerning the Lockerbie case

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Reaffirming its previous resolutions on the matter,

Welcoming Security Council resolution 1506 adopted on 12 September 2003, immediately lifting the sanctions imposed on the Great Jamahiriya,

Recalling its resolution 14/229 adopted on 28 March 2002 and its resolution 16/266 adopted on 23 May 2004, demanding the release of the Libyan national Abdel Basset Al-Megrahi and regarding him, as long as he remains in detention, as a hostage according to all international law and custom,

Noting resolution 6496 adopted on 3 March 2005 by the Ministerial-level Council of the League at its one hundred and twenty-third ordinary session,

Recalling the extensive damage done to the Great Jamahiriya by the sanctions imposed upon it,

Decides:

1. To commend the judicious handling of the Lockerbie issue over the years by the Libyan people and its leaders, and to express its appreciation to the Great Jamahiriya for satisfying all the requirements of Security Council resolutions in this matter, and for its flexible position, which has now led to the resolution definitively lifting the sanctions imposed upon it;

2. To express its thanks to all States and regional and international organizations that helped bring about a resolution of this dispute;

3. To express its thanks to the Secretary-General and Secretariat of the League of Arab States for their efforts over the years to have the sanctions lifted;

4. To reaffirm the legitimate right of the Great Jamahiriya to receive just compensation for the damage done to it in both material and human terms by the sanctions that were imposed upon it;

5. To reiterate its demand for the release of the Libyan national Abdel Basset Al-Megrahi and to reaffirm its view that as long as he remains in detention, he is to be regarded as a hostage according to all international law and custom;

6. To request the Secretary-General of the League to monitor the implementation of this resolution and to report thereon to the Summit-level Council at its next ordinary session.

(Summit resolution 17/301, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Rejection of the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States on the Syrian Arab Republic

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

· The note by the Secretariat, and

· The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,

Expressing astonishment and dismay at the adoption by the United States Congress of a statute entitled the Syria Accountability Act and the action by the President of the United States in signing, on 11 May 2004, an executive order imposing sanctions unilaterally, outside the framework of international legality,

Having noted the statements, announcements and resolutions adopted by various intergovernmental forums and non-governmental organizations expressing the international community's rejection of one State's action in giving its national legislation primacy over the principles of international law with a view to infringing upon the sovereignty and interests of States and their peoples,

Observing that the unilateral imposition of coercive laws is incompatible with the rules and orientations of the World Trade Organization, which prohibits the taking of measures likely to impede the freedom of international trade and navigation,

Expressing its astonishment at the enactment of this United States legislation aimed at an Arab country that is fundamental to the stability and security of the region, at a time when the United States is seeking to promote cooperation with Arab States in combating international terrorism and to bring about necessary reforms in order to create the widest possible partnership between the two sides,

Reaffirming its resolution 16/263 adopted on 23 May 2004 at the Tunis Summit,

Decides:

1. To reject the so-called Syria Accountability Act, deeming that it oversteps the principles of international law and United Nations resolutions and gives United States law primacy over international law;

2. To express full solidarity with the Syrian Arab Republic and appreciation for its position that the language of dialogue and diplomacy should have primacy as a means of achieving mutual understanding between States and resolving disputes between them; and to call upon the United States Administration to enter in good faith into constructive dialogue with Syria to develop the most advantageous ways

of settling issues that stand in the way of better relations between their respective countries;

3. To ask the United States to reconsider the above-mentioned legislation in an effort to avoid making the situation worse and squandering opportunities to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region, inasmuch as the legislation in question constitutes overt bias in favour of Israel and inflicts serious harm on Arab interests;

4. To express full solidarity with Lebanon against attempts to undermine the fraternal relations that have historically obtained between it and Syria; and to reject interference in its internal affairs by means of the so-called Syria Accountability Act or any other similar legislation;

5. To request the Secretary-General of the League to monitor the implementation of this resolution and to report thereon to the Summit-level Council at its next ordinary session.

(Summit resolution 17/302, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Support for peace, development and unity in the Republic of the Sudan

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat, and
- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,

Affirming its solidarity with the Sudan in its efforts to establish peace and stability throughout its territory and uphold respect for its sovereignty, territorial unity and independence, and asking all States to take practical action in that connection by supporting efforts aimed at achieving peace and national reconciliation among all its people,

Expressing great dismay at the evolving situation in the Darfur region and the humanitarian crisis confronting those of its people who have left the region and sought refuge in Chad,

Decides:

I. In the matter of the southern Sudan:

1. To welcome the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on 9 January 2005 in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, deeming it to be the beginning of a new phase of stability, peace and national reconciliation throughout the Sudan, and the end of the longest conflict in Africa; to express its esteem for the Secretary-General's contribution to the signing of the agreement and acting as one of the witnesses for it; and to ask him to continue his efforts to ensure the participation of the League of Arab States in the monitoring committees for the implementation of the comprehensive agreement;

2. To encourage Arab States to make their contributions to the Arab fund to assist the Sudan in developing the south, with a view to the execution of

development projects in the southern part of the Sudan, including in particular projects which the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement agree merit priority;

3. To invite Arab States, funds and funding institutions to pursue their efforts and to participate actively in the Fourth Coordination Meeting for Development and Investment in Southern Sudan in the course of the current year, to coordinate investment for development in the southern Sudan and regions affected by the war, especially in the fields of infrastructure and public and social services; and to urge them to participate actively in the international Donors' Conference on Sudan that is to be held in mid-April 2005 in the capital of Norway, Oslo;

4. To reaffirm its invitation to Member States, the Arab Monetary Fund and concerned Arab funding agencies to deal with the Sudan's debts to them in such a way as to support the advance of peace and stimulate development and reconstruction efforts throughout the Sudan;

II. In the matter of the crisis in the Darfur region:

1. To support the efforts being made by the African Union to deal with the crisis in the Darfur region, especially its political mediation and its support for and monitoring of the ceasefire signed on 8 April 2004 in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad; to call upon all parties to observe meticulously the conditions set forth therein; to invite Member States to provide the financial and technical support needed to enable the African Union to continue and intensify its efforts in that connection; and to welcome the results achieved at the five-sided summit held on 17 October 2004 in Tripoli, in the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on the settlement of the crisis in the Darfur region;

2. To invite the parties to resume the high-level inter-Sudanese peace talks on Darfur, without preconditions, and to strive with all determination to reach agreement on basic principles in the next round of negotiations aimed at paving the way for a comprehensive final settlement of the crisis; to urge those parties fully to implement the terms of the security and humanitarian protocols signed on 9 November 2004 in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, acting without delay and in good faith in order that no time may be lost in improving the humanitarian and security situation in Darfur;

3. To call upon the Security Council to grant the Government of the Sudan an adequate, appropriate time frame within which to fulfil its commitments under Security Council resolution 1556 (2004) and its agreements with the United Nations, to reject any suggestion of forcible military intervention in the region or the imposition or threat of the imposition of any sanctions upon the Sudan, and to provide the necessary assistance to enable emigrants and refugees to return to their villages and farms; and to urge international donors and the United Nations to act expeditiously in providing funds to meet the humanitarian needs of victims in Darfur and those who have sought refuge in Chad;

4. To welcome the positive participation of the League of Arab States in the peace talks between the Government of the Sudan and the armed movements in Darfur, which are being held under the auspices of the African Union in Abuja, Nigeria, meetings of the Joint Implementation Mechanism between the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations, and meetings of the joint commission established to monitor the ceasefire signed between the Government of the Sudan

and the armed movements in Darfur, and to request it to continue its efforts with the parties concerned to reach a final settlement of the crisis;

5. To provide the Sudan with immediate assistance to bolster its efforts to deal with the humanitarian crisis and restore security and stability in Darfur; to extend its thanks to Member States that have provided humanitarian assistance in the Darfur region; to invite Member States, Arab organizations, specialized ministerial councils and Arab national associations to provide immediate humanitarian assistance and technical support; and to affirm the direct Arab presence in the Darfur region to provide humanitarian assistance for victims;

6. To extend its thanks to Arab States, institutions and associations that have responded immediately by providing humanitarian assistance for the people of Darfur who have suffered losses; to call upon all Arab parties, including Arab specialized organizations and national organizations, to affirm their presence in the Darfur region and refugee camps and undertake immediate humanitarian relief operations for the victims;

7. To commend the efforts of the Secretary-General and request him to pursue his efforts with the Government of the Sudan, other Sudanese parties and regional and international authorities to support the progress of peace and reconciliation in the Sudan, to prepare for the opening of the LAS office in the southern part of the Sudan for the purpose of coordinating Arab aid and assistance in implementing the peace agreement, and to report to the Council at its next ordinary session.

(Summit resolution 17/303, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Support for the Republic of Somalia

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat, and
- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,

Emphasizing the substantial challenges confronting Somalia as regards the establishment of security and stability and the task of reconstruction, which require immediate assistance from Member States and the international community,

Recalling the resolutions of previous Arab summit conferences on support for the Republic of Somalia, the most recent of them being resolution 16/268 adopted on 23 May 2004 at the Tunis Summit,

Decides:

1. To welcome the positive developments and achievements of the Somalia National Reconciliation Conference held in Nairobi under the auspices of IGAD and with the participation of the League of Arab States, and in particular the election of President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed as President of Somalia and the formation of a transitional Somali Parliament and a transitional Government; and to call upon Member States to provide immediate assistance, which is essential to enable the institutions of the nascent Somali State to perform their functions, including the enforcement of law and order and the reconstruction of the country;

2. To welcome the Somali Government's request for the sending of Arab forces and logistic equipment to support peace in Somalia; to invite Member States to contribute to the delivery and funding of programmes aimed at re-establishing security and stability throughout Somalia; and to invite Member States and the Secretariat to approach the Security Council with a view to ensuring participation by United Nations forces in providing support for peace in Somalia;

3. To entrust the Secretariat with responsibility for continued coordination with the Commission of the African Union, IGAD, and international and regional organizations concerned with the preparation and implementation of a joint programme for the disarmament of Somali militias and the reintegration of their members into society and the Somali State, in cooperation with the Somali Government;

4. To provide the Somali Government with immediate financial assistance in the amount of US$26 million through the Somali support fund administered by the Secretariat, to which Member States will remit contributions in accordance with the scale of assessments for the budget of the League, in order to enable the Somali Government to meet its immediate needs, including the costs of its move into Somalia, and to carry out its work and deliver short-term programmes;

5. To express its appreciation for Kenya's efforts in managing the reconciliation process under the auspices of IGAD and in cooperation with the League of Arab States, the African Union, the United Nations and the IGAD Partners Forum; and to urge the international community to redouble its efforts to enable the Somali Government to complete the work of national reconciliation, re-establish security and stability and the reconstruction of Somalia;

6. To invite all groups and authorities and all segments of the Somali people to work honestly and sincerely, and to cooperate positively with lawful institutions and the elected President of Somalia to lay the foundations of security and stability, preserve Somalia's territorial unity, and restore Somalia to its place within the Arab family and its regional and international setting;

7. To agree that Member States shall assume the costs of Somali diplomatic and consular missions accredited to them, and that the councils of Arab ambassadors shall contribute to defraying the costs of Somali diplomatic and consular missions accredited to international and regional organizations abroad, to enable them to perform their duties;

8. To express deep distress at the refuse burial and disposal operations made necessary by the recent tsunami, which has brought the threat of an environmental and health disaster upon the coasts of Somalia; and to request the Secretariat to take appropriate action on the international scene and coordinate with international organizations concerned with taking remedial action and cleansing the region of the effects of this environmental catastrophe;

9. To entrust the Secretariat with responsibility for pursuing its efforts in coordination with the Government of Somalia and the United Nations Development Programme to execute a project aimed at developing the Somali livestock industry and lifting the embargo imposed on Somali livestock exports, in a context of partnership involving the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development and the Arab Organization for Investment and Agricultural Development;

10. To agree that the Secretariat shall pursue its efforts with the Somali Government and the World Health Organization to dispatch health teams in various fields of specialization, with medical supplies and equipment, to various areas in Somalia;

11. To agree that specialized Arab organizations and Ministerial-level Councils, in coordination with the Secretariat and in cooperation with the Somali Government, shall deliver development programmes aimed at reconstruction and development in Somalia, with particular emphasis on the fields of health, the environment, development, electricity supply, communications and other infrastructure-related areas;

12. To entrust the Secretariat with responsibility for coordinating with the Somali Government for the purpose of organizing a coordination meeting on reconstruction and development in Somalia, bringing together Arab States and funding and investment agencies, at which the Somali Government will present projects requiring funding or investment;

13. To entrust the Secretariat with responsibility for making preparations for the opening of an LAS liaison office in Mogadishu to coordinate Arab support for reconstruction and building and the completion of the reconciliation process in Somalia;

14. To thank the Secretary-General and his colleagues for their valuable efforts to date, and to request him to continue those efforts and report to the Council at its next ordinary session.

(Summit resolution 17/304, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Support for the Union of the Comoros

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered the report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,

Reaffirming previous resolutions on this matter,

Decides:

1. To reaffirm its unreserved support for the national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Union of the Comoros;

2. To support the positive developments taking place in the Comoros and in particular the continued implementation of the Moroni Agreement on national reconciliation; and to invite international and regional organizations and States concerned with the situation in the Union of the Comoros to cooperate and, in coordination with the Secretariat, to provide development assistance to enable the Union of the Comoros to create balanced development among its islands;

3. To invite Arab investment and funding agencies to participate in the donors' conference on the Union of the Comoros that is to be held in Mauritius in the second half of this year with a view to expediting the mustering of the financial resources required for socio-economic recovery in the Union of the Comoros; and to invite them to channel their investment into various areas of economic development in the Union of the Comoros;

4. To invite Member States to remit their financial contributions to the Comoros support fund in implementation of resolution 14/230(c) adopted at the Beirut Summit in 2002, to enable the Secretariat to continue to implement economic development projects in the Comoros; and to thank Member States that have remitted their contributions to the fund;

5. To request Member States and Arab funding and investment institutions, especially the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, to support the establishment of a national university in the Union of the Comoros;

6. To proceed forthwith to open an office of the League of Arab States in the Union of the Comoros to support the role played by the League in bringing about a political settlement and supervising the execution of Arab projects there;

7. To express its appreciation for the Secretary-General's efforts in connection with the execution of development projects in the Union of the Comoros, and his efforts, in cooperation with international and regional organizations, to bring about reconciliation in the Comoros; and to request him to continue to provide the Comoros with development assistance in the light of the sums available in the Comoros support fund administered by the League of Arab States and to report thereon to the Council at its next ordinary session.

(Summit resolution 17/305, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Afro-Arab co-operation

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative, and
- The note by the Republic of the Sudan in the matter,

Recalling the declarations and resolutions of the first Afro-Arab Summit Conference in Cairo, 7-9 March 1977,

Taking note of the resolutions of the African Union and the Afro-Arab programme aimed at activating Afro-Arab solidarity,

Affirming the importance of developing Afro-Arab cooperation, supporting stronger Arab-African relations and striving to eliminate obstacles in that connection, with a view to ensuring that that cooperation is based on shared political, economic, trade-related and cultural interests,

Reaffirming previous resolutions on this matter,

Decides:

1. To affirm the importance of continued efforts to eliminate obstacles to the promotion and development of Arab-African cooperation and the organization of meetings between bodies concerned with that matter, having regard to resolutions adopted by the Ministerial-level Council of the League; and to entrust the Secretary-General with responsibility for maintaining liaison in that connection with a view to achieving meaningful, mutually beneficial cooperation based on shared political, economic, trade-related and cultural interests, confident that such an approach will maintain Arab-African relations and avoid any pitfalls;

2. To note with appreciation the orientations of the African Union in favour of the activation and consolidation of fraternal Arab-African relations in the framework of a strategy designed to eliminate obstacles to Arab-African cooperation;

3. To support the proposal submitted by the Republic of the Sudan concerning the holding of a workshop on the horizons of Arab-African cooperation in consultation with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States;

4. To welcome Libya's announcement that it is prepared to host the next session of the Standing Commission for Afro-Arab Cooperation; to request the Secretary-General to perform the necessary liaison work to set a date for the session and determine its agenda, including the organization of an Afro-Arab forum to encourage two-way investment and strengthen the foundations of cultural and academic relations; and to welcome the expressed wish of the Sudan and Morocco to participate in the work of the next session of the Standing Commission;

5. To invite African Arab States to pursue their efforts to coordinate with African States in proposals for reform of the United Nations, including fair and balanced representation for the African continent in United Nations institutions;

6. To entrust the Secretariat with responsibility for pursuing communication with the NEPAD Secretariat to support the participation of Arab States in the implementation of NEPAD programmes and projects, thereby enhancing and developing cooperation and investment in various socio-economic development projects and promoting and supporting common Arab and African interests;

7. To affirm the importance of the role played by the Arab Fund for Technical Assistance to African and Arab countries and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa; and to express its appreciation for their action in supporting development efforts in African States;

8. To emphasize active participation by Member States in the seventh Afro-Arab Trade Fair scheduled to be held in Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan, from 23 November to 1 December 2005; to entrust the Secretariat with responsibility for pursuing its efforts to ensure that preparations for the Afro-Arab Trade Fair are adequate, in cooperation and coordination with the host States, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and the Commission of the African Union; and to agree that Member States shall invite the public, private and mixed sectors to participate in the economic, commercial and cultural events accompanying the Fair;

9. To invite Member States, the Secretariat and the Arab Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization to intensify their efforts to enable the Afro-Arab Cultural Institute to pursue its efforts and deliver its programmes; to invite Arab funding and investment institutions to contribute to the support of the Institute's programmes and activities; and to invite the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa to contribute to the support of its training programmes;

10. To entrust the Secretariat with responsibility for strengthening and supporting LAS missions in Addis Ababa and Nairobi, proceeding without delay to open an LAS mission in the capital of the Republic of South Africa, and to allocate the necessary financial resources with a view to supporting and strengthening Afro-Arab cooperation mechanisms.

(Summit resolution 17/306, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Reform of the United Nations:

(a) Reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat,
- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative, and
- Resolution 6513 on reform of the United Nations adopted on 3 March 2005 by the Ministerial-level Council of the League of Arab States at its one hundred and twenty-third ordinary session,

Taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the high-level panel established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to examine challenges and threats confronting international peace and security, and the ongoing international dialogue on options and suggestions for the reform of the United Nations,

Decides:

1. To affirm:

(a) That it is essential to commit to a holistic concept of United Nations reform and balanced and effective implementation of all reform programmes, without being constrained by time frames that may not allow for adequate study of such programmes;

(b) That it is necessary to strengthen the role of the United Nations and its main agencies in order to enable them to attain the objectives set forth in the Charter, including the maintenance of international peace and security, the development of friendly relations among nations, and the achievement of international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character;

(c) That it is important for the issue of United Nations reform to be addressed in an integrated manner, with institutional reforms being combined with substantive development aimed at enabling United Nations bodies to fulfil their mandates;

(d) That all Arab States are determined to contribute to the process of United Nations reform in a way that reflects and takes due account of the hopes, aspirations and interests of approximately 300 million Arabs in twenty-two States Members of the international organization;

2. To call for the process of United Nations reform to be based on the following principles:

(a) Respect for the principles of the equality and sovereignty of States and the inadmissibility of interference in their internal affairs, deeming respect for these principles - which are set forth in the Charter - to be the cornerstone of relations between States;

(b) The building of consensus on any institutional reforms that it may appear desirable to introduce into the formation and operation of United Nations bodies, and the avoidance of divisiveness and disagreement, which inevitably tend to hobble the work of the Organization;

3. To demand that the reform process shall aim at the attainment of the following objectives:

The General Assembly:

(a) Restoration and strengthening of the General Assembly's role in maintaining international peace and security, deeming it to be the main international legislative body that comprises the membership of the international Organization;

(b) Reaffirmation of the role of the General Assembly in dispute resolution, peace enforcement and peacekeeping, through its oversight of the Peacekeeping Commission that is to be established;

(c) Establishment of mechanisms responsible for enforcing Assembly resolutions;

The Security Council:

(a) Reform of the working methods of the Security Council to make it more transparent and democratic, avoidance of selectiveness and double standards in dealing with international issues, and a greater measure of participation by non-member States in its work;

(b) Enlargement of the membership of the Council to achieve greater representation of the general membership, and correction of the present disparity in the ratio of the number of States that are members of the Council to the number of States Members of the Organization;

(c) Affirmation of the need to restrict the use of the veto power in the Security Council to make it exercisable within narrower limits, and establishment of the necessary rules for that purpose, including rules restricting its exercise to resolutions adopted under Chapter VII, and subject to clear conditions;

(d) Affirmation of the importance of developing and approving precise criteria and clear principles governing the choice of candidates for permanent membership of the Security Council;

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Activation of the developmental role of the Council;

(b) Maintenance of the authority conferred upon it by the Charter with respect to its functional commissions;

The Secretariat:

(a) Provision of the necessary resources to enable the Secretariat to perform its functions as regards the implementation of the Organization's general policies, development programmes and socio-economic programmes;

(b) Respect for the international character of the Secretariat as stated in Article 100 of the Charter.

(Summit resolution 17/307(a), adopted on 23 March 2005)

Reform of the United Nations:

(b) Enlargement of the membership of the Security Council

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Secretariat,
- The report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative, and
- Resolution 6513 on reform of the United Nations adopted on 3 March 2005 by the Ministerial-level Council of the League of Arab States at its one hundred and twenty-third ordinary session,

Taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the high-level panel established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to examine challenges and threats confronting international peace and security, and the ongoing international dialogue on options and suggestions for the reform of the United Nations,

Decides:

1. To support the endeavour of the Arab Republic of Egypt to obtain a permanent seat on the Security Council in the event of the enlargement of its permanent membership;

2. To continue the present agreement concerning an uninterrupted Arab presence through a non-permanent seat from Africa and Asia alternately.

(Summit resolution 17/307(b), adopted on 23 March 2005)

Greater Arab Free Trade Area

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States:

Having considered:

- The report by the Economic and Social Council on the Greater Arab Free Trade Area, action to date to give GAFTA full effect on 1 January 2005, and the elimination of all customs tariffs, duties and taxes of similar effect on goods of Arab origin exchanged among Arab States that are members of GAFTA, and
- The efforts of the Economic and Social Council to eliminate all barriers to intraregional Arab trade with a view to activating GAFTA and thereby producing a positive impact on intraregional Arab trade flows and increasing investment rates in Arab States, and its action to remove non-tariff barriers and complete the work of developing detailed rules of origin for Arab commodities,

Appreciating the efforts of the Economic and Social Council in this regard, and commending the commitment of Arab States that are members of GAFTA to the agreed Programme of Implementation,

Reaffirming the need to eliminate non-tariff administrative, technical, financial, monetary and quantitative barriers, to complete the work of developing

detailed rules of origin, and to coordinate rules and legislation between Arab States to ensure that they are in conformity with the provisions of the Agreement for the Facilitation and Promotion of Intra-Arab Trade,

Expressing gratification at the initiation of secondary negotiations between a number of Arab States aimed at liberalizing trade in services and incorporating it into the framework of GAFTA,

Welcoming the action of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria in ratifying the Agreement for the Facilitation and Promotion of Intra-Arab Trade and its announcement that it is acceding to GAFTA,

Decides:

I

1. To entrust the Economic and Social Council with responsibility for conducting a study on barriers tending to prevent some Arab States from acceding to GAFTA, especially the least developed Arab States, and to endeavour to further the accession of those States by providing enabling facilities in the framework of the Programme of Implementation and Arab summit resolutions in that connection;

2. To invite Arab funding institutions to contribute to the funding of the technical support programme for the least developed Arab States that is being prepared by the Economic and Social Council pursuant to Arab summit resolution 16/272, adopted on 23 May 2004, to facilitate the accession of those States to GAFTA;

II

1. To entrust the Economic and Social Council with responsibility for pursuing its efforts aimed at the elimination of non-tariff barriers in Arab States, completion of the task of developing detailed rules of origin to activate GAFTA, and taking the necessary steps to enhance Arab trade performance, and agrees that Arab States shall cooperate with the Economic and Social Council to that end;

2. To request Arab Member States that were previously granted exemptions by the Economic and Social Council to desist from applying those exemptions without restrictions or conditions;

3. To invite Arab States that have not yet entered the negotiations on the liberalization of trade in services between Arab States to enter those negotiations as soon as possible, in accordance with the measures defined by the Economic and Social Council in that connection;

III

To entrust the Economic and Social Council with responsibility for pursuing its efforts to prepare a programme of implementation for the establishment of an Arab customs union pursuant to article 8 of the Agreement for the Facilitation and Promotion of Intra-Arab Trade, on the model of the programme of implementation for GAFTA, and to report thereon to the next Arab Summit in 2006.

(Summit resolution 17/308, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Development of the transport sector in Arab States

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered the efforts currently under way in the framework of the Council of Arab Ministers of Transport, the Arab Civil Aviation Organization and Arab transport associations, which are taking place under the auspices of and in coordination with the Economic and Social Council, to develop transport among Arab States,

Expressing gratification at progress to date toward completion of the basic infrastructure of networks of overland road links between Arab States, and affirming the need for greater coordination among the various relevant authorities at border crossing points to facilitate transport between Arab States,

Commending progress to date in the programme for the liberalization of air transport between Arab States, which has yielded a noteworthy increase in air traffic between Arab States, and noting in particular the drafting of the Agreement on the Deregulation of Air Transport between Arab States, in preparation for the final phase of that programme and the willingness of a large number of Arab States to sign the Agreement at the meeting of Arab Ministers of Transport and Civil Aviation held in Damascus on 18-19 December 2004, with the imminent prospect of the establishment of an Arab free market in air transport,

Decides:

I. Air transport

1. To affirm the importance of proceeding without delay to ratify the Agreement on the Deregulation of Air Transport between Arab States in preparation for its coming into force from November 2006, in accordance with the schedule agreed by the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth ordinary session in Beirut in 2002;

2. To invite Arab States to proceed without delay to ratify the Agreement on the Arab Collective Mechanism for Negotiation with Regional or Subregional Blocs in the Field of Air Transport, as this will protect Arab interests, with the issue being monitored by the Arab Civil Aviation Organization;

II. Overland transport

To entrust the Economic and Social Council with responsibility for:

1. Completing the economic aspects of the Arab Convention on the Overland Carriage of Passengers Between and Across Arab States, which was approved by the Council of Arab Ministers of Transport;

2. Investigating the feasibility of integrating the single-window system at land border crossing points between Arab States, as a means of achieving the necessary coordination among all official authorities for the facilitation of the movement of goods and persons through those points;

III. Marine transport

1. To affirm the importance of pursuing current efforts to develop a legal framework for Arab legal cooperation in various areas of marine transport, with a

view to creating a solid foundation for Arab private-sector navigation in order to take optimal advantage of its potential;

2. To entrust the Secretariat with responsibility for continue to monitor the application of the uniform Arab tariff structure governing fees and charges in Arab ports, and the extent to which Member States have brought their national legislation and regulations into line with that structure.

(Summit resolution 17/309, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Promotion of Arab intraregional tourism

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Conscious of the important and expanding role of the tourism sector in strengthening the economies of Arab States,

Aware of the importance of encouraging private tourism-related investment by all available means in order to promote the growth and development of the tourist industry in Arab States,

Seeking to bring Arab intraregional tourism up to the level of average regional tourist flow volumes observed in other parts of the world,

Affirming the close relationship between the tourist sector and other service sectors, which affects the overall quality of tourism in Arab societies,

Decides:

1. To affirm the role of Arab and regional funding institutions in funding feasibility studies on joint Arab tourism projects with a view to encouraging private-sector investment in such projects;

2. To endorse the steps being taken by some Arab States to create joint entry visas and facilitate air transport by opening their airspace, inasmuch as these measures directly affect the overall performance of the Arab tourism sector; and to urge other Arab States to examine the feasibility of applying these facilities.

(Summit resolution 17/310, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Arab electricity grid

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Recalling previous resolutions on projects for an electricity grid linking the States of the region and linking those States with neighbouring foreign States,

In the context of the continuing efforts of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Electricity to complete and strengthen the Arab electricity grid so that it covers all Arab States,

Noting the technical and financial difficulties facing the least developed Arab States in their efforts to complete their domestic electricity grids and determine their needs for interconnection with the other Arab States,

Decides:

1. To entrust the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Electricity with responsibility for cooperating with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development in conducting a study designed to estimate the needs of the least developed Arab States in the matter of the completion of their domestic electricity grids as a necessary step toward the interconnection of those grids with those of other Arab States, and with a view to enabling them to seek funding for that purpose from Arab, regional and international funding agencies;

2. To affirm the importance of ensuring that institutional and legal frameworks in Arab States conform to the requirements of Arab electricity grid projects as regards conditions and standard specifications, so that their grids can be interconnected with those of neighbouring States; and the importance of acting without delay to establish a coordinating monitoring centre for States for which interconnection is a reality;

3. To entrust the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Electricity with responsibility for cooperating with the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development in exploring ways of using natural gas in Arab States to produce and export electricity.

(Summit resolution 17/311, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Information and communication technologies

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Recalling resolution 13/214 adopted at Amman on 23 March 2001, directing stakeholders in the communications sector in Arab States to endeavour to develop a reasonable, balanced tariff for communication services between Arab States,

Noting progress in measures to bring the Agreement to Establish the Arab Information and Communication Technology Organization into force,

Decides:

I

1. To invite Arab States to develop and track the marketing of communication services at competitive rates with a view to enhancing the prosperity of the Arab economy and enabling it to confront global competition;

2. To entrust the Council of Arab Ministers of Communications with responsibility for following up the task of conducting the economic feasibility studies required for the establishment of optical fibre communication systems;

II

1. To invite Arab States to proceed without delay to execute strategic Arab projects relating to information and communication infrastructure, human resource development, the information technology environment and e-trade, and to establish databases at country level in preparation for the establishment of Arab regional databases serving to create a sound, competitive infrastructure for new operators;

2. To urge Member States that have ratified the Agreement to Establish the Arab Information and Communication Technology Organization to proceed without delay to complete procedures for ratifying the Organization's Statutes, so that its

founding can be announced and it can initiate its activities before the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society.

(Summit resolution 17/312, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Sustainable development

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Recalling resolution 16/273 adopted at the Tunis Summit in 2004, which approved the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region and its implementation mechanisms under the supervision of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment,

Having considered the plan of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment for implementation of the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region,

Decides:

1. To approve the plan of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment for implementation of the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region;

2. To entrust the specialized Arab organizations with responsibility for implementing the content of the plan, each in its area of competence;

3. To invite the Governments of Arab States to develop human capacities and strengthen and build national institutional frameworks for sustainable development as a fundamental prerequisite for successful implementation of the plan;

4. To invite United Nations organizations and donor agencies to support the implementation of the plan;

5. To welcome coordination between the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); and to invite the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment to coordinate its efforts relating to implementation of the plan with efforts being undertaken in the African context, with the Council's Technical Secretariat providing liaison in that connection.

(Summit resolution 17/313, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Sustainable agricultural development and Arab food security

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered the outcomes of the meeting of senior officials responsible for agricultural policy in Arab States held at the Headquarters of the League Secretariat on 5-6 December 2004,

Aware of the regional and international challenges confronting sustainable agricultural development and food security in the Arab region,

Convinced of the important role of the agriculture sector in development and as a means of securing the welfare of Arab people and a reliable supply of food for them,

Expressing its appreciation of the efforts being undertaken and the role being played by the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development,

Wishing to give fresh impetus to the Joint Arab Agricultural Action initiative in order to enable it to compete and penetrate world markets,

Decides:

To entrust the General Assembly of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (Arab Ministers of Agriculture) with responsibility for completing the preparation of an Arab sustainable agricultural development strategy for the next two decades (2005-2025) designed to enhance the competitive ability of Arab agricultural products to penetrate world markets, achieve Arab agricultural integration and meet Arab States' needs in terms of agricultural commodities, developing the necessary mechanisms for implementation of the strategy, and presenting it to the Economic and Social Council for consideration.

(Summit resolution 17/314, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Arab industrial development strategy

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Recalling resolution 16/276 adopted at the sixteenth ordinary session of the Council at Tunis in 2004, by which the Ministerial Council of the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization was entrusted with responsibility for completing, by the end of 2004, the preparation of an Arab industrial development strategy designed to enhance the competitive ability of Arab industry and achieve integration in various industries, and developing the necessary implementation mechanisms, the said strategy to include specific proposals for the development and establishment of industries in Arab States in accordance with a programme covering the coming decade,

Having considered the Arab industrial development strategy prepared by the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, as approved by its Ministerial Council at an extraordinary meeting held in the city of Khartoum from 27 to 29 December 2004 under the auspices of His Excellency, President Omar Hasan Al-Bashir, and attended by His Excellency, Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States,

Expressing its appreciation for the outstanding efforts of the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization in its fields of competence,

Wishing to give fresh impetus to Arab industry to enable it to overcome the challenges confronting it,

Deeming industrial development a strategic choice in economic and social development aimed at enhancing the welfare of Arab people and creating more job opportunities for them,

Decides:

1. To endorse the Arab Industrial Development Strategy as an integral part of the Joint Arab Socio-Economic Action Strategy;

2. To entrust the Ministerial Council of the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization with responsibility for implementing those components of the Strategy that are within its areas of competence;

3. To agree that the relevant authorities in Arab States, and in particular Ministries of Industry and Mineral Resources, shall provide the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization with the necessary support and facilities for the implementation of programmes in the context of the Strategy.

(Summit resolution 17/315, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Investment

(a) Implementation of the Unified Agreement on the Movement of Arab Capital between Arab States

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The resolutions of the Economic and Social Council relating to implementation of the Unified Agreement on the Movement of Arab Capital between Arab States, and in particular resolutions 73/1509 adopted on 19 July 2004, 74/1523 adopted on 9 September 2004, and 75/1555 adopted on 17 February 2005,
- The recommendations of the meeting on implementation of the Agreement held at the Headquarters of the League Secretariat on 12 January 2005, organized by the Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation in cooperation with the League Secretariat,

Decides:

To agree that the Governments of Arab States shall:

1. Amend and develop their respective national rules and procedures relating to investment with a view to encouraging Arab investment within Arab States;

2. Compile and publish information and issue explanatory material on the benefits and guarantees contained in national legislation relating to investment, and on investment opportunities available, and disseminate that material to Arab businessmen and investors;

3. Develop human resource skills in the field of investment promotion;

4. Grant Arab investors most-favoured-nation treatment.

(Summit resolution 17/316(a), adopted on 23 March 2005)

Investment

(b) Study on Arab financial institutions and support for development projects in Arab States

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered the study prepared by the Arab Monetary Fund on Arab financial institutions and support for development projects in Arab States,

Greatly appreciating the role played by Arab financial institutions and national development funds in the development of Arab States,

Affirming the importance of ongoing review of the working priorities of Arab funding institutions by their shareholders' councils to ensure that those institutions are meeting the requirements of Arab economies, including private-sector participation in investment and development processes and concentration on funding for small and mid-sized industries,

Expressing its thanks to the Arab Monetary Fund for the valuable study it has prepared,

Decides:

1. To take note of the contents of the study by the Arab Monetary Fund and to endeavour to implement the recommendations formulated therein;

2. To agree that shareholders in Arab financial institutions and Arab mixed governmental corporations shall discuss the areas covered by the programmes of those institutions and consider whether it is necessary to reformulate their programmes, procedures and conditions to respond more effectively to new developments and changing priorities;

3. To agree that shareholders' councils of the above-mentioned institutions and corporations shall study the feasibility of increasing their capital in the light of the need to extend their programmes into new sectors;

4. To agree that action shall be taken to open Arab mixed governmental corporations to private-sector participation.

(Summit resolution 17/316(b), adopted on 23 March 2005)

Second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis, 16-18 November 2005)

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The note by the Republic of Tunisia on the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis, 16-18 November 2005), and
- The outcomes of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003,

Expressing, on behalf of Arab leaders, its appreciation of the Arab coordination and preparatory work performed under the supervision of the Council

of Arab Ministers of Information and Communication Technology prior to the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva in 2003,

Aware of the positive opportunities afforded by the appropriate application of the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit in supporting the building of an Arab information society,

Aware of the importance of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society,

Decides:

1. To entrust the Council of Arab Ministers of Information and Communication Technology with responsibility for continuing its excellent work in preparation for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society;

2. To agree that Arab States shall participate at the highest levels, and that civil society institutions and the private sector shall participate intensively in the second phase of the World Summit on the Information society that is to be held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005; and to focus on ensuring that it is practical and development-oriented in character;

3. To affirm through the Conference that the ICT development process, the accommodation and application of its array of technologies and the closing of the digital gap between the States of the world are key tools for the establishment of a balanced, dynamic society and the achievement of comprehensive development.

(Summit resolution 17/317, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Arab Strategy on the Family

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

- The Arab Strategy on the Family, and
- Resolution 478 on the endorsement of the Arab Strategy on the Family, adopted on 5 December 2004 by the Council of Ministers of Social Affairs,

Believing in the importance of building a sound, secure, stable Arab family and making all preventive and curative health conditions available to ensure that all family members are in good health and able to enjoy their rights,

Aware that it is essential to build a family that is open to the age we live in and can benefit from and assimilate its scientific and technological achievements while simultaneously holding to positive Arab social and cultural values and participating positively in human culture and civilization,

Seeking to strengthen the position of the family and enhance its place among civil society institutions, and to promote the development of national policies to that end and to ensure the integration of the family and its participation in decision-making mechanisms,

In the framework of the tangible accomplishments of the Arab family health project,

Decides:

I

1. To approve the Arab Strategy on the Family, appended hereto, as an invaluable set of guidelines to family policy;

2. To invite Arab Member States to use the Strategy as a source of guidance in developing or reviewing their national strategies in the area of the family, having regard to duly ratified Arab and international Charters and laws and regulations in force in Member States;

3. To invite Joint Arab Action institutions to contribute to the work of realizing the objectives set forth in the Strategy;

II

To instruct the Secretariat to communicate the measures being taken in this connection by the competent authorities in Arab Member States.

(Summit resolution 17/318, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Annex

Arab Strategy on the Family

Preamble

In the light of the values and principles taught by the revealed religions, and in the light of the concepts of mutual love, respect and solidarity among individuals and among families down through successive generations,

Taking into account the characteristics of the Arab family, the constitution of which includes cultural elements that are prevalent in Arab societies,

Having regard to the actual situation of the Arab family, which specialized studies have shown is in need of support and assistance,

Aware of the importance of interaction with constant international and regional change in order to take advantage of what have been found to be its positive aspects and avoid its potentially undesirable negative aspects,

In pursuance of efforts aimed at providing the family with as much protection and support as possible, to enable it to fulfil its basic functions in maintaining the human race, playing its role in bringing up new generations and contributing to the progress of society,

Consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, the Declaration adopted at the World Conference on Women, the provisions of the Pact of the League of Arab States, the Arab Statement on Family Rights, the Social Action Charter and Strategy of the Arab States, the Arab Plan of Action for the Ageing, the Arab Strategy for the Advancement of Women, the Arab Youth Policy Paper, the Second Arab Plan of Action on Childhood, and the bases and principles set forth in those documents for the strengthening of a family life of dignity,

Believing that the task of bettering the situation of the Arab family requires the adoption of an Arab position officially committing Governments to an affirmation of

the family's position in society, the strengthening of the bonds between family members and between generations, the improvement of families' living conditions, and the development of legislation and other statutory instruments aimed at supporting and protecting the family.

Pursuant to the resolution adopted at the Doha Conference in January 2003 on the development of an Arab strategy on the family, the crystallization of the framework of that commitment, and the definition of areas of action in response to present and prospective challenges, Member States and civil society organizations agree to take appropriate measures during the period 2004-2014.

Main challenges

Reports and information contained in studies relating to the family have unanimously agreed that the Arab family has been and continues to be exposed to a number of factors and changes that have affected its composition, structure, functions and roles, its stability, its value system, modes of behaviour and lifestyles, with a resultant impact on relations between family members and between generations. Despite the achievements that have been realized as a result of the application of relatively successful programmes under governmental auspices, especially in the areas of education, health care, and training and skills development for young people that have enabled them to find jobs and found families of their own, the emergence of women into the job market, and the enactment of legislation regulating family formation and relations within the family, the Arab family continues to face substantial challenges. Some of the most noteworthy of those challenges are:

- The widening knowledge and technology gap between nations and peoples as a result of the rapid rate of technological development, the knowledge revolution, and scientific progress and its applications;
- Political change and economic globalization, which have imposed harsh measures upon developing States, including Arab States, with the result that Government spending has been cut back and the role of the State in the social sphere has been reduced;
- The appearance of factors of social instability as a result of negative repercussions on most sensitive social issues, such as employment and education, with resultant growth in unemployment, the exclusion of broad categories of citizens from social protection, the education situation and the growing problem of illiteracy, the dropout phenomenon, child labour, the declining standard of living of the middle class, and the spreading phenomena of drug use, addiction and violence, all of which are factors that jeopardize social stability and progress;
- The absence of democracy at the political level, the appropriation of decision-making, the retreat of the movement of construction and development, the spread of unemployment, rising poverty and crime rates, and the impact of all the above on the family;
- Developmental policies that are deficient as regards the human aspect, and the fact that social development operations and their local programmes are bound up with the priorities and objectives of donor institutions, have led to neglect of the fundamental needs of families and receding human development levels;

- Social values, and consequently family values, that are shifting toward individualism, materialism and consumerist tendencies, weakening family relations, impacting the values of solidarity and cooperation within families, and contributing to the appearance of new patterns of deviant, anti-social behaviour among family members;

- Weakening and deterioration of family relations as a result of the narrowing of opportunities for daily interaction among family members, with the appearance of symbolic and material forms of violence between them and the growing phenomenon of divorce, with its inevitable impacts on generations within the family and children in particular;

- The growing tendency for young people to go abroad to study or work, which has led to the advent of far-reaching transformations in population characteristics, with attendant impacts on the demographic situation, such as later marriage, permanent celibacy and rising dependency ratios, thereby aggravating the social situation of the family and jeopardizing its stability. In addition, the growing phenomenon of absent fathers, who have gone to work abroad, has contributed to the instability of families and the appearance of juvenile delinquency;

- The growing tendency for entire families to emigrate to countries in which they do not enjoy the rights of citizens and are at risk of discrimination and marginalization and have difficulty integrating, while at the same time losing their natural ties and rights in their countries of origin;

- The growing phenomenon of women heads of families as a result of widowhood, family disintegration, divorce, death or other reasons, and this is placing added burdens upon them as mothers, especially in the absence of institutional mechanisms and programmes designed to assist them;

- The moral dangers threatening families as a result of the media, which broadcast programmes containing scenes of violence and delinquency, conceal facts and present misleading information for political or other ends;

- The scarcity of scientific information, reports, research and studies on the situation of the family, which has meant that there have been few credible authoritative sources on which to rely for the formulation of social policies for the benefit of families or the development of integrated family policies;

- The appearance of factors of political instability and deteriorating security conditions because of the increase in cases of violence and terrorism that some Arab countries have experienced;

- The impact on the Arab world of the occupation of Palestine and Iraq, with resultant growing human and economic losses and deteriorating security and social situations, which have led to a focus on efforts to resist these occupations, at the expense of efforts to address development problems;

- The spreading phenomenon of terrorism, which deprives families of their fathers and sons, whether killers or killed, victims or perpetrators, with the resultant loss to families of their material and moral potential, leading to their disintegration, the loss of their natural status as a healthy environment for the inculcation of elevated values and principles and appropriate behaviour, and the disappearance of their contribution to the establishment of a stable, secure society.

The road ahead

To enable the Arab family to become:

- A stable, secure family whose members enjoy all their rights, with their lives governed by democracy and relations among them characterized by dialogue, leading to their internalization of the concepts of human rights, participation, non-discrimination, constructive continuity between generations, and an ongoing endeavour to strengthen the principles of solidarity, mutual support, justice and equality;
- A family that is active in the organization of society, able to develop its functions positively, interacting with the changes of the contemporary age and the positive achievements of globalization, including scientific and other knowledge, and integrating with other institutions in the development and advancement of society, while retaining human, religious and national values and remaining within the limits of the teachings of the true Islamic religion;
- An Arab family that is receptive to various human civilizations and cultures, intercommunicating with others in a constructive interaction process that contributes to human culture and civilization on a basis of equality and mutual respect to achieve a more secure future for humanity, one that is free of armed conflicts and wars and in which justice and peace prevail;
- An Arab family that brings up its children to respect human rights and democracy, fundamental freedoms, the growth of mutual understanding, tolerance, honesty, spiritual and social values, respect for the law, and respect for the revealed religions, and endeavours to strengthen the principles of solidarity and mutual support among them and with other families, consistently with the Arab identity;
- A family that respects the elderly and seeks to provide them with care, with the assistance and support of appropriate legislation making provision for health care for persons in that category.

Basic premises

1. The family is a guiding instrument for social policies focusing on main general objectives and essential issues, based on an interpretation of the situation and the identification of its weaknesses and strengths without plunging into matters of detail, and containing general plans for measures designed to attain the ends in view;

2. The family is a natural entity comprising its members and providing the setting for the details of their lives, a natural community supporting intercommunication among its members in a context of religious and cultural values, and a social institution endeavouring to achieve material and moral security for its members, and hence stability for society as a whole;

3. Recognition of the fact that there are a number of types of Arab family, differing widely in their situations and characteristics as regards size, quality of life, priorities and needs, and also widely disparate with respect to the extent to which they have evolved and their relations with civil society organizations;

4. Commitment to the principles and objectives set forth in the Pact of the League of Arab States and the socio-economic, educational and cultural strategies

expressed in specialized Arab plans of action and statements, and in particular those relating to the family, women, children and young people;

5. Affirmation of the contents of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and international and Arab Charters, strategies, conventions and other instruments relating to the institution of the family, and ongoing adjustment of their provisions in the light of practical outcomes;

6. Use of a diverse array of measures, programmes, activities and modes of intervention through agencies and institutions with a mandate to address issues and problems affecting the family.

Principles

1. The family is the basic unit in the foundation of society and is responsible for the functions of producing children, caring for them, and seeing to their emotional, social and political development. It is a social institution, corporate in nature, with full juridical personality, and it serves to deepen a sense of belonging, inculcate values and stability, instil knowledge, and provide an example of ethical behaviour based on religion and citizenship.

2. Documented marriage is the starting-point for the foundation of a natural family in a context of a union between the sexes in accordance with religious and civil law.

3. The family is a basic cell that provides a setting for concord and relations of mutual affection and respect among its members.

4. The members of a family share a common life and destiny. It is their duty to contribute together to build a better life based on the values of mutual affection, love, respect and cooperation, with individual responsibility, freedom of choice, dialogue and intercommunication both within the family and outside it.

5. The family is the nucleus of society and the natural framework that is most worthy of support, that it may be able to provide the care that is due its children, interact with the changes occurring in the contemporary world, and fulfil its roles and functions in various social contexts.

6. The State is responsible for preparing appropriate circumstances for keeping the Arab family sound, ensuring its cohesiveness, empowering it and protecting its values, thereby strengthening its culture and identity and the identity of its children and enhancing the value of knowledge and work, while also providing it with legislative and socio-economic guarantees and making employment opportunities, social security and basic services available to it.

7. The State is responsible for protecting the family from violence and disintegration, in accordance with the provisions of its constitution and laws, and for providing educational opportunity, employment and social security to ensure its safety and well-being and enable it to lead a life of dignity. The provision of employment opportunities is an essential function that is fulfilled through the cooperation of all stakeholders at all levels, including families in the local community, government agencies, educational institutions, civil society institutions, the media and the private sector.

8. Empowerment of the family and strengthening of its capacities are a fundamental precondition for its fulfilment of its evolving functions and its contribution to the implementation of plans for the development and advancement of society and the development of its human resources, within the various social strata and geographic regions to which they belong.

9. It is essential to maintain the foundations of the Arab family, which has helped to preserve the values, principles and culture that have protected successive generations and kept them from falling into delinquency, and to endeavour by all available means to eliminate fear of the collapse and breakdown of the family.

Objectives and action

1. To build a sound, balanced, secure, stable family that is committed to the conditions of preventive and curative health from its inception to guarantee the health of its children, seeks to ensure that its members enjoy all their rights, and in which relations of trust, love and respect prevail.

Measures to that end:

At Government level:

1. Regulation of marriage, its conditions, and the responsibilities arising from it; definition of relations between spouses and children and the rights and duties of all in the light of Islamic law; enactment of legislation stipulating health conditions required of persons wishing to marry and requiring them to obtain certificates attesting that they are free of hereditary diseases or disorders likely to cause deformities or handicaps in their children;

2. Institution of family courts and establishment of local units or offices to provide family guidance; reintroduction of the concept of the family council to deal with marital and family disputes and problems involving children and contain their negative repercussions;

3. Introduction of implementing regulations to bring into force laws relating to child support in the event of divorce, or in the event of the neglect of children, physical or moral violence against them, or their mistreatment at school or in society;

4. Adoption of the necessary policies and measures to provide reproductive health, child health and adolescent health services and services for women of childbearing age, in order to ensure safe maternity and healthy children, and to guarantee access to preventive and curative health services, including examinations for early detection of contagious diseases and hereditary disorders;

5. Development of preventive strategies to eliminate factors tending to result in the birth of disabled children, and other strategies for the care of disabled persons, making optimal provision for meeting their health-related, intellectual and psychological needs and integrating them into society, either through their families or through specialized institutions;

6. Measures designed to make children born in lawful wedlock to a father of alien nationality eligible for their mother's citizenship as well as that of their father, in order to strengthen their attachment to the societies in which they live and enable them to secure the education and basic care necessary for their growth and stability;

7. Commitment by Governments to the principle of partnership with community associations, civil society institutions and academic specialists to discuss family issues and develop plans for the advancement of the family, with periodic assessment of progress or obstacles;

8. Preparation of an awareness enhancement plan, with implementation of its various tasks to be distributed among governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations and the various media, aimed at instilling awareness of the responsibilities arising from marriage and the founding of a family. The plan should encompass all the media and all levels, with civil society organizations and government bodies cooperating and sharing funding costs;

9. Production by the media of scientific awareness programmes, entertainment programmes and educational programmes as a means of strengthening ethical and family values. In that connection, two-way communication between Ministries of Culture and Information and Ministries of Social Affairs at the national and regional level will be vitally important to the task of generating information flows that will enable planners to design programs for children and family audiences containing scientific information of the first order while also holding the attention of listeners and viewers;

10. Encouragement for the production of television programmes and serials that contribute to the building of sound, balanced families, support the values of enlightenment, participation and freedom of choice, and seek to promote the abandonment of medically and socially harmful practices that tend to turn families into permanent sources of conflict and breakdown.

At the level of non-governmental organizations and the private sector:

1. Organization of popular awareness campaigns that will give rise to non-traditional programmes aimed at:

(a) Promoting awareness of practices conducive to safe maternity and responsible paternity, ensuring that children receive basic care, equality between boys and girls, and information about rational spending in order to control the family's consumption behaviour;

(b) Conveying the importance of mutual affectionate concern and dialogue between spouses and other family members, and offering advice on overcoming problems and protecting the family from disintegration and collapse;

(c) Instilling a culture of health, environmental awareness and the prevention of deadly diseases such as AIDS and infectious hepatitis, especially among young people;

2. Encouragement for the establishment of family consultation offices that will help prevent problems from arising or becoming unmanageable for spouses or children;

3. Establishment of specialized institutions to care for and rehabilitate victims of domestic violence, and to organize awareness campaigns and programmes to combat such violence and condemn its perpetrators;

4. Preparation of informational materials addressing family problems such as delaying the age of marriage or refraining from marriage and the dangers associated with harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and early

marriage, as well as problems of family spending and budgeting, and the organization of programmes and activities to be implemented through partnership between governmental and non-governmental institutions to address these problems;

5. Organization of informational dialogues between women and men on family-related issues and problems with a view to offering solutions and bringing together points of view on issues arising in the course of family disputes and quarrels, with special emphasis on shared family decision-making and shared responsibility for child-rearing and support for the values of partnership, democratic dialogue and non-discrimination;

At the inter-Arab level:

1. Preparation of a model legislative guide on the family, regulating marriage and defining relations between spouses and children and setting forth the rights and duties of all in the family setting, with a view to responding to contemporary developments;

2. Activation of the role of non-governmental associations and organizations in the area of the establishment of marriage funds, and action to encourage their institution in Arab States in an effort to enable them to play an important role in assisting low-income groups or groups with special needs, as a practical expression of social solidarity and mutual support;

3. Research on various forms of social controls in dealing with deviant behaviour such as narcotics use, extremism, illicit sexual relations and the like, and on the identification of appropriate means of rehabilitation and social conditioning designed to avoid and deal with these deviant forms of behaviour;

4. Financial and technical support from regional and international organizations and funds for private institutions and associations that are concerned with the victims of domestic violence, including medical, psychological and legal aspects;

5. Organization of or participation in regional and international meetings convened to consider the concerns and problems of the Arab family, with exchanges of views, experience and expertise on issues with global resonance.

II. Action to enable the family to perform its basic functions

Measures to combat poverty, improve families' quality of life and enable them to develop their capacities with a view to helping them continue steadfastly to erform their basic functions, contribute more effectively to social action and the reinforcement of social stability.

Measures to that end:

At Government level:

1. Adoption of policies designed to incorporate the human, social and health dimensions into the development process;

2. Enactment, amendment or development of Arab legislation relating to the insurance and pension system, and adoption of financial policies aimed at reducing disparities between socio-economic groups and helping marginalized and low-income groups to raise their standards of living;

3. Amend Arab legislation with a view to the empowerment of women in society;

4. Organization of national anti-poverty programmes and poverty mitigation programmes aimed at various social groups, including low-income groups, at all socio-economic and health status levels;

5. Amendments to investment legislation in Arab States to bring it into line with the situation of the Arab family;

6. Support for various productive enterprises and encouragement for private-sector institutions that establish or foster small family-run industries, especially in economically disadvantaged regions in urban areas, rural areas and semi-desert areas;

7. Adoption of a law on small business enterprises in urban areas, rural areas and semi-desert areas with a view to strengthening the empowerment of the family and women in the sustainable development process;

8. Organization of grants, loans and credit facilities under easy conditions, with government guarantees and offered on a preferential basis, for men and women responsible for supporting families in economically disadvantaged rural or remote areas;

9. Development of plans and programmes aimed at strengthening human capacity building and the care of persons with special needs;

10. Development of official and private technical and vocational training centres with high performance quality standards to deliver training courses aimed at teaching skills to and upgrading the capacities of heads of families of both sexes with a view to enhancing their self-reliance; linkage of vocational training programmes with current and anticipated long-term job market needs; and constant renewal and upgrading of those programmes;

11. Establishment of special mechanisms working in cooperation with government agencies or civil society institutions to market the products of families working in the informal sector, to enable them to continue producing and marketing those products;

12. Provision of quality education for all, backed by legislation making it compulsory and free, and development of programmes to eliminate barriers to the attainment of those objectives;

13. Action by Governments to expedite the fulfilment of their commitments to promote literacy among all social groups of both sexes and reduce the incidence of illiteracy until it is completely eliminated; action to address the dropout phenomenon and gender disparity in school attendance at the primary level; action to encourage pupils to complete their education;

14. Recognition of the need to create a mechanism aimed at impelling governments to enact and enforce legislation making it compulsory for heads of low-income and rural families to send their school-age children of both sexes to school, and not to send them out to work before they have completed their primary education, with incentives designed to facilitate compliance by such families;

15. Preparation of a plan to develop integrated health services, including preventive medicine, family planning, child care, primary health care and school medicine services, and action to make them available in all regions, especially in economically disadvantaged, rural and remote areas;

16. Expanded availability of day care centres and kindergartens in residential and commercial districts in which large numbers of mothers work with a view to giving them opportunities to engage in gainful employment and achieve promotion, such day care centres and kindergartens to be provided by social security institutions, local authorities or private business enterprises, and all parties concerned to contribute to the cost of operating them;

17. Publication of periodic statistical reports on the prevalence of poverty, based on internationally used indicators and criteria, and the use of those reports to develop national plans to reduce income disparities and differences in economic circumstances between families and address the structural factors giving rise to poverty in general;

18. Adoption of policies and measures aimed at preventing malnutrition and anaemia;

19. Action to enforce legislation relating to the rights and care of the elderly;

20. Development of conditions governing the fitness of housing for human habitation, with regulations prohibiting the location of industrial facilities alongside residential housing units;

21. Provision of recreational areas and public spaces for the benefit of families and individuals.

At the level of non-governmental organizations and the private sector:

1. Fresh thinking about means of investment, and action to inform families about new areas of income-generating activities, productive skills acquisition, technical advice and self-reliance in establishing independent business enterprises;

2. Development of programmes on intra-family dialogue between spouses and between parents and children;

3. Dispatch of work teams to contribute to the task of teaching heads of families, and especially women heads of families, how to establish, follow up and run small business enterprises, and to teach them about the best ways of developing such enterprises;

4. Organization of workshops and training courses in local communities in rural and semi-desert regions to enhance families' awareness of the importance of educating their daughters and the positive implications of education for the girls involved, their families and their future lives;

5. Participation in the work of establishing networks of community associations and organizations concerned with family matters and action to coordinate their efforts, and ongoing communication with families receiving their services to evaluate the programmes and projects delivered by the community sector;

6. Conclusion of partnership agreements among governmental and non-governmental institutions to distribute the tasks of providing integrated community and health services for poor or migrant families;

7. Organization of discussion groups, with governmental and non-governmental organizations participating, on plans and programmes relating to the highest-priority basic needs of local community residents, and establishment of local committees to ensure that those programmes are launched, evaluate them, follow up their achievements and ensure that they continue;

8. Development of programmes designed to enhance families' awareness of the importance of rational consumption and to develop the values of saving as an essential aspect of the family economy;

9. Organization of periodic meetings attended by various persons active in these associations and organizations with a view to comparing experience and exchanging expertise in all areas of common activity.

At the inter-Arab level:

1. Encouragement for exchanges of expertise and pioneering experimental initiatives between Arab States with a view to their mutual advantage, especially efforts aimed at expanding social security and social insurance networks, establishing development funds, organizing training and skills development programmes, launching family businesses and the like;

2. Holding of inter-Arab conferences to consider issues and problems affecting the family, organization of training courses to exchange experience in the fields of new job creation programmes and projects for families and family income enhancement, provide training in social programme and project design, budget preparation, funding flows and the like;

3. Organization of workshops for exchanges of expertise and evaluation of inter-Arab educational experiences with a view to preparing up-to-date programmes focusing on self-learning and continuing education methods to ensure ongoing post-graduation development of the capacities of family members and children, in the light of scientific and technological progress and in response to job market needs;

4. Execution of the Arab Informal Education Project for those who are interested, in order to provide family members with an opportunity of upgrading their academic qualifications through correspondence or Open University studies, thereby enabling them to improve their situations.

III. Building a family that is receptive to the contemporary age with a view to achieving comprehensive, sustainable development in the light of scientific achievements and technological innovations and enabling families to put down positive value-related, cultural and socio-economic roots and contribute positively to human culture and civilization.

Measures to that end:

At Government level:

1. Adoption of integrated family policies within a comprehensive outlook designed to address issues relating to family development and skills acquisition in

various fields, featuring the observation approach in research on the situation of the family;

2. Application of active teaching methods aimed at accustoming children to sound, critical scientific thinking and bringing out their creative abilities in various situations both within the family and outside it;

3. Reviewing teaching and instruction curricula with a view to the incorporation into them of thinking that evokes new scientific values consistent with the religion of the community, the Constitution of the State and sound traditions, technological innovations, the development of methods of discussion and dialogue, acceptance of others' views, and propagation of these concepts through the media;

4. Commissioning of research on changes in the prevailing value systems with a view to crystallizing value-related and intellectual orientations that enable individuals to benefit from positive contemporary innovations;

5. Support for the family's role in self-teaching and provision of the materials needed for its effective exercise; facilitation of the task of applying its approaches and methods to enable both the family as a whole and its individual members to renew their knowledge and skills and develop their capacities, thereby acquiring the ability to deal with the innovations of the contemporary age and globalization;

6. Action to enhance families' awareness of means and mechanisms for inculcating in their members democratic values and participation in the management of social institutions in general and the family in particular; introduction of those values and their exercise in the school environment, and action to incorporate them into regular education programmes;

7. Formulation of an information strategy on family issues, and production and dissemination of information messages designed to buttress civilized family values on the one hand, and the values of science, knowledge and dialogue on the other hand;

At the level of non-governmental organizations and the private sector:

1. Encouragement for families and training for family members in participation and successful intercommunication, with each of them contributing his or her view in reaching decisions with a bearing on the life and interests of the family;

2. Cooperation with the media in disseminating a culture of freedom of opinion and the right for individuals to be different;

3. Organization of training workshops on new role distribution patterns in the light of the employment of mothers and children;

4. Organization of conferences and symposia attended by Arab non-governmental organizations and associations and organizations and associations in States of residence to discuss issues of relevance for the émigré Arab family, with exchanges of experience and expertise on the identification of appropriate solutions for the protection of Arab families at risk of disintegration because of socio-economic and political changes occurring in Arab societies; the aim of these forums will be to provide expanded opportunities for intercommunication, discussion and exchanges of information, experience and opinions between émigré families living

abroad, in their States of residence or elsewhere, in an effort to explore shared issues and concerns, common values, and a common interest in avoiding conflict, striving for mutual understanding and propagating an atmosphere of peace.

At the inter-Arab level:

1. Sociological field studies in Arab States on the situation and functions of the Arab family in the presence of the changes occurring in social values and prevalent behaviour in the family and attitudes to family issues, and identification of the values underpinning the contemporary Arab family, with a view to attaining optimal means and mechanisms for strengthening and reaffirming positive values;

2. Organization of conferences to propagate a family culture that affirms the principles of justice, equality and equal opportunity, respect for differing views, and adoption of the principle of democracy and integration of that concept into the life of society and within the family;

3. Action to expand opportunities for cooperation between the Arab family and the international family, so that both can benefit from the experience of others, in line with the religious and social Arab family values.

IV. Action to enhance the status of the Arab family, improve its position among social institutions and in its immediate environment, and develop national policies for development and integration of the family and ensure its participation in decision-making mechanisms.

Measures to that end:

At Government level:

1. Incorporation of family development, family empowerment, family self-reliance and family self-management programmes into development plans, and provision of the necessary financial resources for implementation, follow-up and evaluation of those programmes;

2. Establishment of national High Councils or Commissions on the family, with their membership to include representatives of specialized ministries, non-governmental organizations, universities and social research centres, to coordinate efforts aimed at developing recommendations on national family policies, prepare plans and projects, monitor their implementation and evaluate their outcomes;

3. Establishment or development of national mechanisms to enforce the provisions of Arab and international instruments enshrining various rights of families;

4. Encouragement for the integration of women into development activities through the use of employment policies that take women's family responsibilities and childbearing functions into account;

5. Encouragement for voluntary work and expansion of the scope of such work beyond traditional charitable endeavours into developmental activities that provide a return for families, and action to facilitate the formation of community associations and organizations that support family development and help families perform their functions efficiently.

At the level of non-governmental organizations and the private sector:

1. Organization of seminars and discussion groups on families' connections with contemporary issues and human and social development issues, enlisting the help of the various media to broadcast these awareness-enhancing activities on a wide scale;

2. Execution of projects designed to meet the varied needs of families and to establish links of intercommunication and cooperation between families and various social institutions;

3. Action to provide more opportunities for young people to participate in voluntary social work as a means of training them to engage in dialogue, assume responsibility, and communicate with persons belonging to various age groups and educational and social levels;

4. Construction of social communication networks between regions and districts and exchanges of services among them as a means of strengthening their social feeling and deepen their citizenship awareness;

5. Organization of occasions for stimulating discussion in residential districts about public issues and questions relating to the facilities, programmes and services needed by families;

6. Organization of workshops designed to make young people and children aware of the concept of sustainable development and the importance of environmental preservation in order to ensure that the needs of future generations can be met;

7. Organization of workshops and films designed to train families in methods of constructive action to guide their children in choosing wisely among what they see on television or on the Internet, and in the development of their critical standards in response to programmes and films that glorify crime, violence and corruption.

At the inter-Arab level:

1. Support for inter-Arab cooperation in developing plans, programmes and projects aimed at development of the family and the human capacities of family members, and stimulation of community participation in development and decision-making;

2. Convening of specialized round tables to consider contemporary changes and their impact on the Arab family and discuss the best ways of taking advantage of their positive aspects while avoiding their negative aspects in terms of their impacts on the being and function of the family and society.

V. Establishment of an up-to-date database on the situation and characteristics of the Arab family, and creation of an Internet site for the benefit of scientific investigators, persons interested in family issues and decision-makers.

Measures to that end:

At Government level:

1. Establishment of national databases on the socio-economic, health-related, educational and cultural situation of the family as the foundation-stone for the preparation of national social development policies;

2. Preparation of an inventory of governmental institutions, community associations and offices of regional and international bodies that are active in providing family care, protection and development services, and action to evaluate their situations, activities and programmes;

3. Signing of cooperation agreements between national Councils or Commissions on the family and universities and specialized research centres in each State with a view to directing the attention of students and investigators to the need for research on various aspects of the family and family-related issues;

4. Preparation of a bibliographic index of research and special studies on the family consisting of doctoral dissertations submitted at various Arab universities, to form the nucleus and initial collection of an Arab library of family studies;

5. Commissioning of critical studies on national legislation relating to family issues as a means of identifying gaps and shortcomings in that area with a view to taking corrective action, thereby enhancing families' effectiveness in performing their functions and playing their social roles;

6. Development of the expertise and skills of those working in the various fields of social investigation and action relating to family issues, through appropriate theoretical, practical and technical preparation.

At the level of non-governmental organizations and the private sector:

1. Compilation of data and conduct of research on matters of priority concern for the Arab family (relations, roles and functions), and also on related social phenomena such as juvenile delinquency, substance abuse and the phenomenon of violence, which is becoming widespread in some family environments, including research on types of violence and the harm resulting from it;

2. Establishment of national monitoring agencies to track changes confronting the family, the effects of change on families' situations, characteristics and functions, and various social issues and phenomena, with the resulting data to be used as the basic source of information for publication of an annual report on the situation of the family and as a means of assisting national Commissions on the family in developing their programmes and projects.

At the inter-Arab level:

1. Development of uniform rules, at the level of the League of Arab States, for the compilation of data, statistics and indicators for measuring family-related phenomena and characteristics that are suitable for purposes of Arab and international comparisons;

2. More active cooperation between Arab States in the field of comparative sociological and family studies, with the development of uniform terminology as a means of facilitating joint field studies, exchanging data and analysing and addressing problems;

3. Encouragement for Arab States to conduct field studies and research on social phenomena that are prevalent in some Arab societies, and allocation of the necessary financial resources for that purpose.

VI. Action to strengthen connections with émigré Arab families, support them and protect their rights, with a view to building confidence, renewing links and exchanging benefits between those families and their countries of origin.

Measures to that end:

At Government level:

1. Enactment of legislation to protect the property and rights of émigré families and persons working abroad and support their sense of belonging to their countries;

2. Research on the family emigration phenomenon and identification of its causes and motivation and its impacts on national economies on the one hand, and on the life of the families concerned themselves on the other hand;

3. Conclusion of cooperation agreements between émigré supplying and receiving countries, whether Arab or non-Arab, to establish organized rules for dealing with family issues and the rights of family members in the event of disputes between or separation of the spouses, to preserve the interests of the children;

4. Streamlining of residency permit and work authorization issuance procedures for émigré men who marry women with nationality of the host country, to make it easier for them to support their families;

5. A positive view of mixed marriage as an experiment deserving of protection and support because of its contribution to the enrichment and diversification of bonds between peoples, especially where there are no essential countervailing factors;

6. Action to facilitate necessary family reunification measures for persons working in Arab countries, and action to enable them to benefit from social services for workers and guarantee their right to education and their right to enrol their children in educational institutions at all levels;

7. Official invitations to prominent Arab émigrés to visit their countries of origin for purposes of intercommunication and exchanges of views on matters relating to the welfare of émigrés and the interests of their countries, especially as regards enhanced investment opportunities in those countries;

8. Adoption by Arab Governments of positive positions in support of the rights and interests of Arab émigré communities in various countries, especially in view of the fact that in some instances they may face dangers and hardship;

9. Broadcasting of television programmes featuring direct communication and conversation between émigré families and their relatives in their countries of origin, to enable them to exchange views on issues of common interest.

At the level of non-governmental organizations:

1. Establishment of associations mandated to reinforce material, moral and social links with émigré families, protect their rights, and organize travel and visits to their countries of origin on special occasions or on a regular basis, and meetings with their relatives or family members who have not emigrated to enable them to exchange views, thoughts and positions on issues relating to emigration and other matters;

2. Convening of a conference to enhance popular awareness of the positive and negative impacts of emigration on the national economy and on the identity and development of Arab societies, and to identify problems arising from mixed marriage and develop solutions;

3. Action to create or preserve and foster information programmes that strengthen the family, social and cultural links of émigrés with their countries of origin.

At the inter-Arab level:

1. Development of state-of-the-art programmes designed to teach the Arabic language to the children of émigré families, in cooperation with the Arab Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ALECSO), in order to build and activate tools of communication and interaction with Arab émigré communities abroad and enable them to be aware on an ongoing basis of the affairs of their countries of origin;

2. Preparation of programmes and files on the lives of prominent Arab émigré families, describing their accomplishments and the difficulties and challenges that confronted them in their work and family lives as they worked their way up to their present eminent positions;

3. Action to expand the resources of the Arab Emigration Monitoring Organization to enable it to track the situations of Arab émigré families, especially as they are affected by cultural, social, economic and political issues in their countries of residence.

VII. Help for Arab families that are enduring hardship because of natural disasters and famines and action to ease the suffering of those afflicted by war, occupation and armed conflict, by providing them with emergency assistance.

Measures to that end:

At Government level:

1. Preparation of relief plans to deal with hardship arising from natural disasters and the effects of war, occupation and armed conflict, such plans to include specific measures to be taken by Governments to avoid human losses, minimize and limit material damage, and mitigate the impacts arising from these situations;

2. Development of preparedness programmes for the provision of relief and assistance to afflicted families to enable them to recover their balance and rebuild their lives;

3. Identification of the capacities at the disposal of local communities, especially communities affected by disasters of the kinds referred to above, that can be harnessed for relief and salvage operations, and training programmes for the members of such communities to teach them how to respond appropriately in emergency situations;

4. Vigilance in case of breaches of international custom, conventions and treaties, and dissemination of information relating to material, moral and psychological casualties and damage and instances of intimidation and rape occurring during wars, armed conflicts and alien occupation; action to raise these

issues in international forums and endeavour to ensure that the perpetrators are punished;

5. Organization of awareness campaigns in the various media, focusing on human rights issues as they relate to resistance to occupation and self-defence, practice in methods of conflict resolution, the enforcement of international law based on the principles of the United Nations, and means of referral to international organizations in the event of violations.

At the level of non-governmental organizations and the private sector:

1. Preparation of plans for the enlistment of volunteers and training courses to prepare them to help with rescue and relief operations, and action to collect contributions and assistance for the benefit of afflicted families;

2. Action to mobilize public opinion and enhance people's awareness of the importance of human solidarity and mutual assistance within the community in dealing with the hardship faced by large numbers of families as a result of disasters of these kinds;

3. Development of innovative, non-traditional programmes and activities aimed at making services available to disadvantaged and marginalized social groups and helping the members of such groups to develop their capacities with a view to enabling them to improve their own situations and living conditions and meet their own basic needs;

4. Organization of training and awareness workshops on appropriate behaviour and relief actions during disasters and crises or situations of economic hardship, with a view to providing heads of families with the skills they need to respond quickly and effectively to contain problems arising from such crises, instead of reacting with resignation and waiting for assistance;

5. Organization of conferences on the hideous consequences left behind by war and armed conflict, action to avoid them from a human standpoint, and condemnation of those who commit aggression against peoples of the world in various international forums;

6. Organization of awareness campaigns to disseminate a culture of peace based on law, justice, and an understanding of the essential distinction between legitimate resistance to alien occupation and illegitimate acts of terrorism and intimidation;

7. Delivery of programmes for the rehabilitation of groups that have suffered economic, social and psychological damage as a result of war and armed conflict, and action to reintegrate them into their communities;

8. Training for volunteers, both male and female, aimed at enabling them to conduct relief and assistance operations and provide first aid and primary medical and psychological care for persons who have suffered or been injured as a result of war.

At the inter-Arab level:

1. Action by Arab, regional and international organizations to make material and technical assistance available to private bodies and institutions that provide families with support and aid in times of hardship;

2. Action to develop the capacities of support, relief, first aid and civil defence agencies and institutions in Member States, and action to support their resources and expertise, enable them to develop and execute rapid intervention programmes and enhance their performance in confronting natural disasters and hazards;

3. Establishment of mechanisms for rapid intervention in disaster situations, and action to enable them intervene positively and effectively to relieve families facing hardship as a result of such situations;

4. Commissioning of studies and research on the suffering of families and family members as a result of military operations and the accompanying practices, especially the inhumane practices of the Zionist occupation in Palestine, the hideous apartheid wall and its destructive impact on the Palestinian family, and widespread dissemination of the findings;

5. Formulation of a demand for United Nations supervision of relief and rescue operations for families afflicted by alien occupation, and proposals for appropriate programmes and mechanisms for their protection;

6. Establishment of institutions mandated to address issues relating to women, families and children in Arab States by adopting, in the legal and social frameworks of those States, draft public policy guidelines for the enactment of legislation in line with Arab and international instruments dealing with the family.

Financial arrangements

In order to implement the Arab Strategy on the Family, Governments, in cooperation with regional and international organizations, donor institutions and funding agencies, shall be required to adopt the financial arrangements outlined below, in so far as they are not incompatible with State policy:

(a) Adoption of a policy to provide funding and allocate the necessary resources to empower the Arab family and ensure its welfare within the budgets of development plans;

(b) Allocation of the necessary sums in official budgets for the establishment of mechanisms mandated to address family issues and the implementation of plans and programmes set forth in the Strategy;

(c) Provision of material support for non-governmental organizations, especially grassroots organizations that are active in rural areas and low-income districts in cities, and participation by those organizations and financial institutions on a priority basis in programme delivery;

(d) Action to facilitate administrative measures, including exemption from taxes and customs duty, to provide the equipment and supplies needed by non-profit non-governmental organizations, especially equipment and supplies intended for use in small family-run enterprises of various kinds;

(e) Funding for small income-generating businesses (run from people's homes or from other premises), especially those that take into account the family's socio-economic circumstances and essential needs;

(f) Action by regional and international funding institutions, working in coordination to prevent overlapping and duplication, to provide support for the

implementation of projects and delivery of programmes contemplated in the Strategy, with a view to the advancement of the Arab family;

(g) Affirmation of the importance of establishing and setting in operation the World Solidarity Fund, the establishment of which was proposed at Tunis and subsequently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2002, deeming that the Fund would be able to provide the resources needed to improve the living conditions of the neediest Arab families.

Institutional arrangements for following up the implementation of projects under the Strategy and evaluating their outcomes

1. Coordination among regional and international programmes and activities organized by the LAS Secretariat's Directorate for the Family, Women and Children, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), United Nations offices and agencies, and the Arab Family Organization;

2. Provision of the necessary financial and administrative support for the LAS Secretariat's Directorate for the Family, Women and Children, to enable it to perform its functions and cooperate with specialized national agencies and Arab, regional and international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental;

3. Support for cooperation between national and Arab scientific research institutions and centres that conduct family-related studies on the one hand and Arab and international organizations on the other for the purpose of gathering data and statistics relating to families, in accordance with criteria and classifications that take into account widely disparate family types and their several environments, and for the purpose of conducting field research and surveys on the situation of the Arab family and how it is being affected by contemporary changes;

4. Support for research and training mechanisms within Arab and international organizations, deeming them to be being well placed to follow up and monitor the extent of progress achieved in implementing the content of the Strategy;

5. Development of the institutional structure of national community associations and mobilization of their capacities and resources, and strengthening solidarity and coordination among them in cooperation with relevant Arab and international organizations;

6. Establishment or development of official national agencies and mechanisms concerned with family issues, with direct links to the highest executive authority in each State, and the allocation of adequate budget resources for them;

7. Establishment of an inter-Arab network of official national agencies and mechanisms concerned with family issues for the purpose of promoting cooperation and exchanges of expertise among them and coordination of their efforts, and for the purpose of promoting coordination between them and regional and international networks of governmental and non-governmental institutions concerned with family issues throughout the world.

General rules:

1. Member States shall take the necessary steps to implement the provisions of this Strategy in so far as their legislation, circumstances and capabilities permit.

2. Member States shall submit yearly reports to the LAS Secretariat's Directorate for the Family, Women and Children on measures they have taken to implement the objectives of this Strategy, noting their main achievements and problems, and DFWC in turn shall submit these reports to the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs at its annual meetings.

3. This Strategy shall come into force after it has been adopted in due form by the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs.

Mechanism for coordination among Arab agencies concerned with natural disasters and emergencies

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered the proposal of the Arab Republic of Egypt on the establishment of a mechanism for coordination among Arab agencies concerned with natural disasters and emergencies,

Affirming the importance of the social and humanitarian aspects of the activities of the League of Arab States and the Joint Arab Action system in general,

Recalling the Initiative on Sustainable Development in the Arab Region and resolution 16/273 on the environment and sustainable development adopted by the Summit-level Council of the League at its sixteenth ordinary session in Tunis in 2004,

In view of the adverse impacts of natural disasters on human life, housing, the environment, national economies and social conditions generally,

Wishing to support the ability of Arab States to deal with the adverse impacts of disasters and to foster coordination of relief and rescue efforts undertaken by Arab States in disaster situations,

Taking into account the Arab Agreement on Cooperation in Organizing and Facilitating Relief Operations, which has been in force since 1990,

Decides:

1. To entrust the LAS Secretariat with responsibility for inviting Arab organizations and agencies working in the area of natural disaster impact mitigation and relief and rescue operations to a meeting for consultation on coordination of their efforts and programmes through the establishment of an appropriate mechanism for inter-Arab coordination in disasters and emergencies;

2. To invite Arab States and relevant agencies to communicate their views and suggestions concerning the proposed coordination mechanism to the LAS Secretariat, taking into account the nature of the tasks performed by existing agencies;

3. To request the Secretariat to report on this matter to the Economic and Social Council at its next session.

(Summit resolution 17/319, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Construction of an Arab earth observation satellite

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered the proposal of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria concerning the construction of an Arab earth observation satellite,

Decides:

To welcome the proposal of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria concerning the construction of an Arab earth observation satellite, and to entrust that State with responsibility for preparing the necessary study and coordinating with the competent agencies in Arab States, subsequently presenting the matter to the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment and the Council of Arab Ministers of Information and Communication Technology, and then resubmitting it to the Economic and Social Council.

(Summit resolution 17/320, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Financial situation of the Secretariat of the League of Arab States

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered the report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative,

Having heard the presentation by the Secretary-General on the critical financial situation of the Secretariat of the League of Arab States,

In the light of the remarks by various distinguished participants,

Decides:

1. To require Member States to pay their assigned contributions in full in the course of the first three months of the fiscal year, in accordance with Article 29 of the Financial Regulations, in the currency of account;

2. To ask Member States that have reservations about their current assessed contributions to the budget of the Secretariat to withdraw their reservations;

3. To remind Member States of their obligation to implement resolution 16/258 on payment of 10 per cent of uncontested arrears annually in addition to the assessed annual contribution, adopted by the Summit-level Council of the League at its session in Tunis;

4. To establish a general reserve for the Secretariat of the League of Arab States in the amount of $35 million, to be built up over a period of five years beginning with the 2006 budget, pursuant to articles 23 and 24 of the Financial Regulations of the Secretariat;

5. To entrust Member States' Deputy Ministers in charge of financial affairs with responsibility for meeting within one month following the adoption of this resolution for the purpose of discussing:

(a) The doubling of financial resources allocated for Part 3 of the budget of the LAS Secretariat;

(b) Distribution of the shares of States unable to pay their assessed contributions, for reasons acceptable to the Ministerial-level Council of the League, to the remaining Member States;

6. To agree that the meeting of Deputy Ministers referred to in the preceding paragraph shall submit its conclusions at an extraordinary meeting of the Ministerial-level Council of the League, to be held within three months, for the purpose of adopting a decision making it feasible to apply the Deputy Ministers' conclusions to the 2006 budget of the Secretariat.

(Summit resolution 17/321, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Plan for a modified organizational structure of the Secretariat

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered the note by the Secretariat,

Having regard to resolution 257 adopted by the Summit-level Council of the League at its sixteenth ordinary session held in the Republic of Tunisia,

Pursuant to the terms of resolution 6539 adopted on 3 March 2005 by the Ministerial-level Council of the League of Arab States at its one hundred and twenty-third ordinary session,

Based on resolution 6541 on this matter adopted by the Delegate-level Council of the League of Arab States at its extraordinary session of 9 March 2005,

Decides:

1. To approve the plan for a modified organizational structure of the Secretariat of the League of Arab States, as shown in the appended chart;

2. To affirm that no new financial burdens shall be added to the budget of the Secretariat;

3. To ask the Secretary-General to prepare position descriptions and determine areas of competence and responsibilities in accordance with the modified organizational structure.

(Summit resolution 17/322, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Human and Financial Resources and General Services Branch

Personnel Affairs and Human Resources Directorate

Director General

Board of Consultants
Special delegates
Advisors to the Secretary-General

Bureau of the Secretary-General
Legal Advisor to the Secretary-General
Media Officer

Deputy Director-General

General Coordination Unit

Hig Commissioner of the Secretary-General for Migration and Émigré Affairs	H.C. of the S-G for Culture and Inter-Cultural Dialogue	H.C. of the S-G for Civil Society	General Directorate for Palestine and the Occupied Palestinian Territories	Gen. Dir. for Political Affairs	Gen. Dir. for the Council of the League	Gen. Dir. for Economic Affairs	Gen. Dir for Social Affairs	Gen. Dir. for Info. And Comm.	Gen. Dir. for Human and Financial Resources & Services	Gen. Dir. for Financial Control	Gen. Dir. for the Technical Assistance Fund

Secretariat of the Economic and Social Council

Directorates

Divisions

Plan of the modified organizational structure of the Secretariat

Expression of thanks and appreciation to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria for hosting the seventeenth ordinary summit in Algiers

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Appreciating the generosity of the People's Democratic Republic Algeria in hosting the seventeenth ordinary session of the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States, and its admirable efforts in preparing and organizing the work of the session,

Decides:

1. To offer its sincere salutations and unstinted gratitude to the President, Government and people of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria for the kindness and hospitality that they have extended to the delegations participating in the Arab Summit;

2. To express its appreciation to His Excellency, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, for his diligent efforts in making it possible for the Summit to be held and for its work to be successfully completed.

(Summit resolution 17/323, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Venue and date of the eighteenth ordinary session of the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States

The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States,

Having regard to the provisions of the annex to the Pact of the League of Arab States relating to the regular periodic convening of the Summit-level Council of the League,

Having regard also to note No. 06/05 dated 15 March 2005 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Djibouti concerning a request from the Republic of the Sudan to the effect that it should take the place of the Republic of Djibouti in hosting the eighteenth ordinary session of the Summit-level Council, and that the Republic of Djibouti should host the twentieth session in place of the Sudan,

Decides:

To hold the eighteenth ordinary session of the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States in the Republic of the Sudan in March 2006.

(Summit resolution 17/324, adopted on 23 March 2005)

Final communiqué

Expression of appreciation to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and recognition of the address by His Excellency President Abdelaziz Bouteflika as an official document of the conference

At the kind invitation of His Excellency President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, the Summit-level Council

of the League of Arab States met in Algiers, capital of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, on 22 and 23 March 2005. The Arab leaders convey their deep appreciation to the President, Government and people of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria for their gracious reception and hospitality, and for the admirable preparatory work that helped the Summit-level Council attain its objectives and carry out its tasks successfully.

In view of the judicious and timely opening remarks by His Excellency President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the Arab leaders decide to recognize his address as an official document of the conference. They greatly appreciate His Excellency's diligent efforts and his distinguished management of the work of the Conference, which he has done judiciously and wisely, thereby contributing substantially to the successful outcome that has crowned the Council's work.

Expression of thanks to Mr. Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, for his endeavours as President of the sixteenth ordinary session of the Summit-level Council

The Arab leaders express their sincere thanks and esteem to Mr. Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, for his invaluable efforts and initiatives and his substantial contributions while serving as President of the previous Summit and as Chairman of the Follow-up and Action Committee and the Arab Troika on Iraq, inasmuch as he thereby contributed in no small measure to the strengthening and activation of the Joint Arab Action initiative and helped to further Arab causes.

Expression of grief for the passing of the great leaders Sheikh Zayid Bin Sultan Al Nahyan and President Yasir Arafat, and His Excellency President Rafiq al-Hariri

The leaders recall, with grief and sorrow, the deaths of the founder of the State of the United Arab Emirates and its eminent leader, who has now passed to the mercy of Almighty God, Sheikh Zayid Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and the leader and symbol of the Palestinian national movement, who has now passed to the mercy of Almighty God, President Yasir Arafat, both of whom, with their wisdom, far-sightedness, steadfastness and determination, helped to strengthen Arab solidarity, defend the causes, honour and dignity of the Arab nation, and support joint Arab action. The leaders welcome the smooth transfer of power in both countries in accordance with their respective Constitutions, and offer their best wishes to the leaders and peoples of these sister countries for further success and progress in fulfilling their national aspirations. The leaders also recall with grief and sorrow and express their condemnation of the abominable assassination of His Excellency, President Rafiq al-Hariri, former Prime Minister of Lebanon, who has now passed to the mercy of Almighty God after having given much to his people and done much for his nation. The leaders ask Almighty God to encompass them all with His mercy and receive them in Paradise with the company of saints and martyrs.

Report by the Secretary-General on the Joint Arab Action initiative

The leaders express their appreciation for the comprehensive report by the Secretary-General on activation of the Joint Arab Action initiative and development of the system, and commend his diligent efforts in monitoring the implementation of LAS Council resolutions.

Development of the Joint Arab Action system

The leaders appreciate the efforts that have gone into the task of preparing draft amendments to the Pact, and approve the following measures:

- Addition of a new article making provision for the establishment of an interim Arab Parliament and the adoption of its Statutes;
- Establishment of a monitoring body on the implementation of resolutions and commitments;
- Amendment of paragraph 2 of article VI concerning voting in cases of aggression against a Member State;
- Amendment of the text of article VII of the Pact concerning changes to the decision-making mechanism;
- Request to the Secretary-General to consult with Member States concerning the appointment of specialized committees to pursue consideration of the proposed establishment of an Arab Court of Justice and an Arab Security Council and to report thereon at the next (eighteenth) ordinary session of the Summit-level Council of the League.

Development of the Economic and Social Council

The leaders express their gratification at the measures taken by the Economic and Social Council to implement resolution 16/280 adopted at the Tunis Summit on 23 May 2004 on the development of the Council, and invite Member States to act without delay to complete procedures for the ratification of the amendment to article VIII, paragraph 1 of the Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty and deposit their ratification documents with the Secretariat. They invite the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Arab Monetary Fund to cooperate with the Economic and Social Council in preparing the Arab Strategy for Economic and Social Development without delay.

Development of the action of specialized Arab organizations and Ministerial Councils

The leaders reaffirm the need to support and strengthen the Joint Arab Action institutions, including specialized Arab organizations and Ministerial Councils, to enable them to fulfil the inter-Arab functions mandated to them and further to enhance their performance in order to keep pace with Arab and international economic changes and innovations. The leaders ask the Economic and Social Council to complete the preparation of its report on development of the action of these institutions and to submit it at the next (eighteenth) ordinary session of the Summit-level Council of the League.

Financial crisis of the Secretariat

The leaders carefully examined the financial situation of the Secretariat in the light of the presentation by the Secretary-General on the extremely severe financial crisis which it is currently experiencing and which is adversely affecting its activities and programmes and the Joint Arab Action system as a whole. The leaders emphasized the absolute necessity of implementing resolutions relating to action aimed at addressing the financial situation of the Secretariat, including in particular

the resolutions on that matter adopted at the previous Arab Summit, notably those dealing with:

- The need for States to pay their assessed annual contributions in full within the period of time specified in the Regulations, in the currency of account, and for States to withdraw their reservations to the amount of their assessed contributions;
- The payment of arrears in accordance with the schedule adopted at the Tunis Summit;
- The establishment of a general reserve for the Secretariat in the amount of $35 million, to be built up over a period of five years beginning in 2006;
- The leaders ask Member States' Deputy Ministers responsible for financial affairs to hold a meeting within one month for the purpose of discussing the doubling of financial resources allocated for programmes and activities and distribution of the shares of States unable to pay their assessed contributions to the remaining Member States, and to present their conclusions at an extraordinary meeting of the Ministerial-level Council of the League, to be held within three months, for the purpose of adopting an appropriate decision in the matter.

Status of development and modernization in the Arab region

The Arab leaders reaffirm the desirability of continued development and modernization in the Arab region in order to respond to the aspirations of the Arab peoples and in line with the changes occurring in the world. They reiterate their appreciation of the interest and approval with which the Arab and international communities greeted the communiqué issued at the close of the Arab Summit held in Tunis in 2004, recalling as it did the role that our Arab nation has consistently played in that area through the ages. They ask the Secretary-General to continue to monitor activities tending to further progress and modernization in the Arab region in the light of reports to be submitted to the League by Member States.

Ideas presented at the 2001 Amman Summit by Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, Leader of the Great 1 September Revolution

The leaders affirm the importance of renewing the mandate of the ministerial committee established to consider the ideas presented by Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, Leader of the Great 1 September Revolution, at the Amman Summit in 2001, so that the committee can complete its task without delay pursuant to the resolution on the matter adopted at the Amman Summit and submit its conclusions to an extraordinary session of the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States to be held in Cairo.

The Arab-Israeli conflict: reaffirmation and activation of the Arab peace initiative

The leaders renew their commitment to the Arab peace initiative, deeming it to be an Arab proposal for the attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region, and reject all positions and practices that are incompatible with it and with the principles of international legality and the agreed terms of reference of the peace process. In this context, they affirm that the peace process is an integral whole which rests upon a basis of international legality and the relevant United Nations

resolutions, including in particular resolutions 242 and 338, the principle of land for peace, and the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, and that no authority of any kind has the right to alter any of the terms of reference of the peace process for purposes of evading commitments assumed in connection with it, renouncing it, or going back on duly signed agreements in that connection. The leaders request the Ministerial-level Arab Peace Initiative Committee and the Secretary-General to endeavour to promote the action plan that has been placed in the public arena with a view to securing the adoption of a resolution by the Security Council or the United Nations General Assembly endorsing the Arab Peace Initiative as a framework for a peaceful solution, and to endeavour to hold a joint meeting with the Quartet Committee for the purpose of taking the necessary measures to further progress toward a settlement in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The leaders also reaffirm the need to reactivate the Arab Peace Initiative as approved at the 2002 Beirut Summit, which called upon Israel to withdraw fully from the occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan, to the line of 4 June 1967, and from the territories in southern Lebanon that are still occupied, to accept the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip having East Jerusalem as its capital, to arrive at a just, agreed solution to the Palestinian refugee problem in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 194, and to guarantee the rejection of all forms of Palestinian resettlement, all in accordance with international legality, the principle of land for peace and the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, whereupon the Arab States will consider the Arab-Israeli conflict at an end and will establish normal relations with Israel in the framework of a comprehensive peace. The Arab leaders invite the international community and all its constituent States and organizations to support and implement this initiative, and they ask the Ministerial-level Arab Peace Initiative Committee to take immediate action to activate the initiative by various means, including consultation with the Quartet Committee.

Developments in the Palestinian issue

The Arab leaders affirm that a Palestinian-Israeli settlement must be based on international law, internationally binding instruments and agreed terms of reference, as exemplified in the relevant United Nations resolutions, the principles of land for peace and the inadmissibility of acquiring land by force, and the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, all of which converge to indicate that the Palestinian people must be enabled to achieve its national independence and establish an independent, fully sovereign Palestinian State having East Jerusalem as its capital. The leaders also affirm that peace between Palestinians and Israelis can be brought about only through a two-State solution based on the 1967 borders. They regard any alteration of or infringement of those terms of reference as an unacceptable attempt to pre-empt the outcome of negotiations and a violation of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. They ask the Quartet Committee to renew its assiduous efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive peace on the basis of the Arab peace initiative and the road map. In that connection, they strongly emphasize that any unilateral withdrawal from the Palestinian territories must be part of the road map, consistent with the Sharm el Sheikh understandings and a step toward a complete withdrawal to the 1967 borders under international supervision. Similar steps must be taken in all parts of the West Bank. The leaders reaffirm the unity and territorial integrity of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and the unacceptability of any alteration to the legal status of even a single part of that

territory, and they rule out the option of a State with temporary borders. The leaders reaffirm the Arab nature of Jerusalem and the illegitimacy of Israeli measures aimed at incorporating it, Judaizing it and altering its nature and its demographic and geographic structure. They condemn the erection of the wall known as the "Jerusalem envelope", the aim of which is to cut off Jerusalem and isolate its inhabitants, and they also strongly condemn Israel's continuing construction of the expansionist wall. They reaffirm the overriding importance of the legal finding of the International Court of Justice in the matter and the necessity of observing the legally binding obligations resulting therefrom upon Israel, States Members of the United Nations, and the international organization itself, including the General Assembly's invitation to Switzerland to take appropriate action in its capacity as the depositary of the Fourth Geneva Convention and its request to the Secretary-General to set up a register of damage resulting from the wall. The Arab leaders call upon States and international organizations to challenge the building of the wall and the destructive impacts resulting therefrom upon the Palestinian people, its land, its water and its borders, and urge upon them the necessity of stopping the work of construction and tearing down the existing parts. The leaders reaffirm their condemnation of the continuing colonization of Palestinian land by illegal settlement activities in all their forms, and reaffirm the necessity of putting a stop to these activities immediately.

The Arab leaders welcome the outcomes of the dialogue among Palestinian groups that was held recently in Cairo, and support the Palestinian national dialogue and the unified Palestinian positions in the matter of the truce and mutual cease-fire.

Financial support for the budget of the Palestinian National Authority and support for the tenacity of the Palestinian people and its national economy

The leaders thank those Arab States that have paid their contributions, in whole or in part, to the Al-Aqsa Fund, the Al-Quds Intifada Fund, the supplementary support fund and the budget, and encourage other States to pay their contributions without delay. They also extend their thanks to Arab peoples, other fraternal peoples, Arab Funds and financial and economic institutions, the organizations of the Joint Arab Action system and Arab voluntary organizations for their role in supporting the Palestinian economy and providing financial, technical and institutional assistance, and invite them to continue to do so. In addition, the leaders thank Member States that have exonerated Palestinian products from customs duties, charges and taxes having a similar effect pursuant to resolution 200 adopted on 22 October 2000 at the Cairo extraordinary summit, and invite other States to do the same without delay. The leaders confirm their invitation to Arab States to continue to support the budget of the Palestinian National Authority in accordance with the resolutions to that effect at Arab Summits, through the same mechanisms, for a period of six months beginning on 1 April 2005.

The Arab leaders express their appreciation for the role being played by the Al-Aqsa Fund and the Al-Quds Intifada Fund in supporting the Palestinian economy, providing assistance for widows and orphans and helping them to become self-supporting, and caring for injured and disabled persons. The leaders call for expansion of the resource base for those two Funds pursuant to the resolution on a further increase in their resources adopted at the Beirut Summit in 2002, and call for a positive response to the message of the Board of Governors of the Islamic Development Bank inviting its Member States to join the Funds. The leaders

endorse the initiative of the Board in offering voluntary institutions the opportunity of using the technical capacity and the contracting and exchange mechanisms developed by the Bank to fund programmes and projects that meet the Palestinian people's most urgent needs and are executed in accordance with state-of-the-art standards and professional practice.

The occupied Syrian Arab Golan

The leaders reaffirm Arab States' firm support for Syria's just claim and its right to the restitution of the whole of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan up to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the principles of the peace process, legally binding United Nations resolutions and the outcome of negotiations held after the 1991 Madrid Conference. The Arab leaders reaffirm, once again, their previous resolutions rejecting all measures taken by the Israeli occupation authorities with a view to altering the legal, natural and demographic status of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, deeming them to be null and void and of no legal validity and constituting a violation of international agreements, the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations resolutions.

The Arab leaders reaffirm that the continued occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan constitutes a constant threat to peace and security in the region and in the world. They condemn such Israeli practices as the building and expansion of settlements, and urge the international community to uphold legally binding United Nations resolutions in the matter. The leaders renew their support for the steadfast endurance of the Arab residents of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and stand side by side with them in their opposition to the occupation and its repressive practices, and their perseverance in clinging to their land and their Syrian Arab identity.

Solidarity with and support for the Lebanese Republic

The Arab leaders reaffirm their condemnation of Israel's continued occupation of Lebanese territory and its repeated violations of Lebanese sovereignty on land, at sea and in the air. The leaders support Lebanon's sovereign right to exercise its political options in the framework of its constitutional principles and institutions, and support its free decisions to establish and strengthen its relations with other Arab States, taking into account historical relationships, especially between Syria and Lebanon. The leaders also affirm their support for Lebanon's political and economic stability and security, and reject all pressures being brought to bear on it.

The leaders reaffirm their support for Lebanon in completing the liberation of its territory and its demand for the release of Lebanese prisoners and detainees held in Israeli prisons, and call upon the Security Council to prevent Israeli violations, require Israel to pay compensation for its acts of aggression against Lebanese territory, apply General Assembly resolution 194 (1948) requiring the return of Palestinian refugees to their country, and reject all forms of resettlement that are at variance with the principles of international law and the particular situation in Arab host countries.

The evolving situation in Iraq

The leaders reaffirm that the unity, sovereignty and independence of Iraq must be respected, without interference in its internal affairs. They welcome the electoral process that took place in Iraq on 30 January 2005, deeming it a great achievement of the Iraqi people on the road to a peaceful and democratic transfer of power. The leaders also welcome all initiatives, and in particular the initiative undertaken by the

Iraqi Government, aimed at promoting a comprehensive national dialogue, and they affirm the necessity of participation by all components of the Iraqi people in all stages of the political process. The Arab leaders also welcome the role that has been assumed by the United Nations in supporting the electoral process in Iraq, and they affirm the importance of its assumption of a central role in the completion of the political process and in reconstruction efforts there. They also affirm the importance of strengthening the role of the League of Arab States in Iraq, in coordination with the United Nations, to provide all forms of assistance, especially with respect to completion of the political process and the work of reconstruction. The leaders welcome the decision by Iraq's creditor States to reduce Iraq's indebtedness to them by 80%, and they urge Arab creditor States to act without delay to forgive or reduce Iraq's indebtedness to them. The leaders condemn all acts of terrorism and violence in Iraq that target civilians, security officers, police, members of the Iraqi armed forces or humanitarian, religious or civilian institutions.

The leaders condemn the grave violations of human rights committed by the previous regime during its occupation of the State of Kuwait, especially as regards prisoners and missing persons of Kuwaiti and other nationalities. The leaders call for continued efforts to discover the fate of those prisoners and missing persons, and urge that the perpetrators of those crimes be turned over to the competent Iraqi courts for trial.

Occupation by Iran of three Arab islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates in the Arabian Gulf, namely the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa

The leaders unconditionally reaffirm the full sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands, namely the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and support all the peaceful measures and actions being taken by the United Arab Emirates with a view to recovering its sovereignty over the occupied islands. They renew their call to the Iranian Government to end its occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, to desist from its political practice of imposing a fait accompli by force, and to abandon once and for all its proposed construction of a monument on the Island of Abu Musa belonging to the United Arab Emirates, deeming the project to be an alteration of the island's status, a violation of its historical and cultural characteristics, and an infringement of the rights and sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates.

The leaders urge the Iranian Government to reconsider its position of refusing to seek a peaceful solution to the issue of the three occupied islands and to translate into practical and concrete measures its declared desire for improved relations with Arab States by responding to their sincere calls for a settlement of the dispute over these islands by peaceful means in accordance with the relevant conventions and the norms of international law and custom, to be reached through direct negotiations pursued in good faith or by resorting to the International Court of Justice. The leaders ask the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to continue to monitor this matter.

Coercive measures against the Great socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

The leaders commend the judicious handling of the Lockerbie issue by the Libyan people and its leaders, and they appreciate the Great Jamahiriya's compliance with all the requirements of Security Council resolutions in the matter

and its flexible position, which has now led to the resolution definitively lifting the sanctions imposed upon it.

The leaders thank all States, regional and international organizations, the Secretary-General and the Secretariat of the League of Arab States for their efforts over the years to bring about a resolution of this dispute and have the sanctions lifted.

The leaders affirm their support for the legitimate right of the Great Jamahiriya to receive compensation for the material and human damage in has sustained in consequence of the sanctions that were imposed upon it, and they reiterate their demand for the release of the Libyan national Abdel Basset Al-Megrahi, deeming him to be a hostage and his continued detention a violation of all international law and custom.

Rejection of the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States on the Syrian Arab Republic

The leaders affirm their rejection of the so-called Syria Accountability Act, deeming that it oversteps the principles of international law, United Nations resolutions and the Charter of the League of Arab States. They proclaim their full solidarity with the Syrian Arab Republic, appreciating its position that the language of dialogue and diplomacy should have primacy as a means of achieving mutual understanding between States to resolve disputes between them, and they call upon the United States Administration to enter in good faith into constructive dialogue with Syria to explore the most advantageous ways of settling disputes between the two countries. The leaders ask the United States to reconsider this legislation, which constitutes overt bias in favour of Israel, closes off opportunities to achieve a just, comprehensive peace, inflicts serious harm on Arab interests, seeks to undermine the fraternal relations that have historically obtained between Syria and Lebanon and constitutes interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon.

Support for peace, development and unity in the Republic of the Sudan

The Arab leaders affirm their solidarity with the Sudan in its efforts to establish peace and stability throughout its territory and uphold respect for its sovereignty, territorial unity and independence, and ask all States to take practical action in that connection by supporting efforts aimed at achieving peace and national reconciliation among all its people. They welcome the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on 9 January 2005 in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, deeming it to be the beginning of a new phase of stability, peace and national reconciliation throughout the Sudan, and the end of the longest conflict in Africa. They express their esteem for the Secretary-General's contribution to the signing of the agreement and acting as one of the witnesses for it, and they ask him to continue his efforts to ensure the participation of the League of Arab States in the work of the monitoring committees for the implementation of the comprehensive agreement. The leaders encourage Arab States, Funds and funding institutions to pursue their efforts and to participate actively in development in the southern Sudan and regions affected by war, especially in the fields of infrastructure and public and social services, and also to participate actively in the international Donors'Conference on Sudan that is to be held in mid-April 2005 in Oslo, the capital of Norway. They reaffirm their invitation to Member States, the Arab

Monetary Fund and Arab funding agencies to deal with the Sudan's indebtedness to them in such a way as to support the progress of peace and stimulate development and reconstruction efforts.

The leaders express great dismay at the evolving situation in the Darfur region and the humanitarian crisis confronting those of its people who have left the region and sought refuge in Chad. They affirm their support for the efforts being made by the African Union, and they welcome the results achieved at the five-sided summit held on 17 October 2004 in Tripoli, Libya on the settlement of the crisis in the Darfur region. The leaders invite the parties to resume the high-level inter-Sudanese peace talks on Darfur without preconditions, and to strive with all determination to reach agreement on basic principles in the coming round of negotiations aimed at paving the way for a comprehensive final settlement of the crisis. They urge the parties concerned fully to implement the terms of the security and humanitarian protocols signed on 9 November 2004 in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, acting without delay and in good faith in order that the humanitarian and security situation in Darfur may be improved without loss of time. The leaders call upon the Security Council to grant the Government of the Sudan an adequate, appropriate time frame within which to fulfil its commitments, and they reject the imposition or threat of the imposition of any sanctions upon the Sudan, or any threat of military intervention.

The leaders invite Arab States to provide immediate humanitarian assistance and technical support, and they affirm the direct Arab presence in the Darfur region to provide humanitarian assistance for victims.

Support for the Republic of Somalia

The Arab leaders welcome the positive developments and achievements of the Somalia National Reconciliation Conference held in Nairobi under the auspices of IGAD and with the participation of the League of Arab States, and in particular the election of President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed as President of Somalia and the formation of a transitional Somali Parliament and a transitional Government. They invite Member States to provide immediate assistance, which is essential to enable the institutions of the nascent Somali State to perform their functions, including the enforcement of law and order and the reconstruction of the country. The leaders ask the Secretary-General to continue to coordinate with the Commission of the African Union, IGAD, and international and regional organizations concerned with the preparation and implementation of a joint programme for the disarmament of Somali militias and the reintegration of their members into society and the Somali State, in cooperation with the Somali Government. The leaders welcome the Somali Government's request for the sending of Arab forces and logistic equipment to support peace in Somalia, and invite Member States to contribute to the delivery and funding of programmes aimed at re-establishing security and stability throughout Somalia. They invite Member States and the Secretariat to approach the Security Council with a view to securing participation by United Nations forces in providing support for peace in Somalia. The Arab leaders urge all groups and authorities and all segments of the Somali people to work honestly and sincerely and to cooperate positively with the elected President of Somalia and lawful Somali institutions to lay the foundations of security and stability, preserve Somalia's territorial unity, and restore Somalia to its place within the Arab family and its regional and international setting. The leaders undertake to provide the Somali Government with immediate

financial assistance in the amount of $26 million through the Somali support fund administered by the Secretariat, to which Member States will remit contributions in accordance with the scale of assessments for the budget of the League , in order to enable the Somali Government to meet immediate needs, including the cost of its move into Somalia.

Support for the Union of the Comoros

The leaders affirm their unreserved support for the national unity and territorial integrity of the Union of the Comoros, and welcome the positive developments taking place there, in particular with respect to national unity and reconciliation. The leaders invite Member States and Arab funding and investment institutions and agencies to continue providing assistance for the Union of the Comoros, and they express their appreciation for the role played by the League of Arab States in supporting development in that country. They invite Member States to remit their financial contributions to the Comoros support fund administered by the Secretariat to enable it to continue to execute development projects in the Union of the Comoros.

Afro-Arab cooperation

In view of the cultural intermingling and shared interests linking the Arab nation and the States of the African continent, Afro-Arab cooperation was a matter of great interest to the Arab leaders, and they considered it in all its various aspects. They affirm the importance of continued efforts to eliminate obstacles to its promotion and the delivery of shared programmes designed to lead to a transition to the stage of meaningful, mutually beneficial cooperation based on shared political, economic, trade-related and cultural interests, confident that such an approach will consolidate the bases of Afro-Arab cooperation, avoid any pitfalls, and strengthen mutual solidarity, which the leaders regard as a safety-valve for their peoples and true security for Africans and Arabs alike. The Arab leaders request the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to that end. The leaders welcome Libya's announcement that it is prepared to host the next session of the Standing Commission for Afro-Arab Cooperation and request the Secretary-General to perform the necessary liaison work to set a date for the session and determine its agenda, including study of the feasibility of holding an Afro-Arab forum to encourage two-way investment and strengthen the foundations of cultural and academic relations.

Arab-European dialogue

The Arab leaders affirm the importance of activating and promoting Arab-European dialogue, which in their view serves the shared interests of both groups and strengthens existing links of economic and social cooperation in accordance with a comprehensive vision, taking into account all aspects of relations between the two sides.

Arab Summit with South American States

The leaders reaffirm the importance of holding an Arab Summit with South American States, and call for active Arab participation in the Summit with a view to strengthening, consolidating and further developing relations with that group of States, deeming that that course of action will serve the interests of both sides.

International partnership relations

The leaders affirm the importance of continuing to build partnership relations with States and groups of States throughout the world, with a view to building bridges of dialogue and cooperation in the interests of all concerned.

Action to make the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction

The Arab leaders express their great distress at the international community's delay in responding to Arab initiatives aimed at making the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, and in particular free of nuclear weapons, despite the support those initiatives have received in many United Nations resolutions.

They affirm that Israel's continued monopolization of nuclear weapons and its rejection of international urging to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the submission of all its nuclear installations to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency represents a serious danger to the region and an obstacle to future arrangements aimed at achieving regional security. In that context, the leaders demand the organization of a United Nations conference to make the Middle East a zone free of these weapons.

Condemnation of terrorism

The leaders renew their unequivocal condemnation of terrorism of all kinds in all its forms, regardless of its motives and justifications, and their rejection of a link between terrorism and any religion or culture. They reject any failure to differentiate between terrorism and the legitimate right of peoples to resist foreign occupation. They emphasize the need to address the roots of terrorism and the importance of more international cooperation to combat terrorism in the framework of law and respect for human rights. They affirm the importance of the outcome of the Counter-Terrorism International Conference held in Riyadh in February 2005, especially as regards the establishment of an International Centre for Countering Terrorism, and the Arab regional conference on combating terrorism held recently at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in cooperation with the United Nations.

Reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council

The leaders affirm the importance of reforming the United Nations in a framework of the principles of the equality and sovereignty of States and the inadmissibility of interference in their internal affairs. They affirm that reform must include restoration and strengthening of the General Assembly's role in maintaining international peace and security, and reform of the working methods of the Security Council to enhance the transparency and credibility of its decision-making process. The leaders affirm the need to restrict the use of the veto power to make it exercisable within narrower limits. They endorse the efforts of the Arab Republic of Egypt to obtain a permanent seat on the Security Council in the event of expansion of the membership of the Council's permanent membership.

Monitoring of the implementation of Summit economic resolutions

The leaders reviewed measures that have been taken to implement resolutions adopted at their previous conferences in various economic fields, and they express their gratification at the extent to which those resolutions have been implemented. They invite all concerned parties, including Member States, the Economic and

Social Council, and all the Joint Arab Action institutions, to devote greater efforts to the task of implementing those resolutions in full in order to meet their objectives and advance the work of the Joint Arab Action initiative.

Inter-Arab, regional and international economic developments

The Arab leaders express their gratification at the growth of the global economy and the continued improvement in economic growth rates in Arab States, despite the adverse developments and events that have taken place in the region. They call for action to address the risks and imbalances confronting continued growth.

The leaders affirm that the continued achievement of growth rates that are essential and appropriate for their countries is contingent on security and stability in the region, further economic reform efforts in their countries, the building of an efficient economic structure, further integration into the global economy, success in attracting investment, and more rapid technology transfer.

The leaders affirm their ongoing effort to improve the climate for investment in order to attract more investment to the region and thereby stimulate economic growth, job creation to address the problem of unemployment, and a more active role for the private sector in development.

They express their gratification at the outcomes relating to agriculture in the Doha Round in the context of the World Trade Organization, and they hope that positive results will be achieved on the remaining issues relating to development in the developing States, with further opportunities for their products to penetrate the markets of the industrial States.

The leaders affirm their support for the applications of Arab States wishing to join the World Trade Organization. They ask States that are members of the WTO not to set stringent acceptance conditions for Arab States.

The Arab leaders express their support for the endeavour to attain the Millennium Development Goals, especially those relating to poverty and hunger and the strengthening of sustainable economic growth in the developing countries. They welcome the New York Declaration on Action Against Hunger and Poverty adopted by world leaders at their meeting in September 2004, and they call for action to implement the recommendations of the meeting through joint action and clearly defined, practical measures that can be implemented.

Greater Arab Free Trade Area

The leaders express their pride at the fact that the Greater Arab Free Trade Area came into effect on 1 January 2005, with the full liberalization of trade in agricultural and industrial products of Arab origin between Arab States that are members of GAFTA and elimination of all customs duties on those products. They invite the remaining Arab States that have not yet joined GAFTA to do so without delay.

They ask the Economic and Social Council to pursue its efforts to eliminate all barriers to intraregional Arab trade, especially non-tariff barriers, and to act quickly to complete the work of developing detailed rules of origin for Arab goods. They invite Arab States to cooperate with the Economic and Social Council to that end.

The Arab leaders affirm their determination to pursue progress toward Arab economic integration by working to establish an Arab customs union. In that connection, they entrust the Economic and Social Council with responsibility for preparing a programme of implementation containing practical steps and a timetable for the establishment of the customs union.

The leaders affirm the importance of proceeding without delay to incorporate trade in services into GAFTA, and invite Member States to expedite negotiations among them to that end.

Development of transport between Arab States

The leaders express their gratification at progress to date toward completion of the basic infrastructure of overland road links between Arab States, and affirm the importance of greater coordination among the various relevant authorities at border crossing points to facilitate trade and the movement of goods. They call for completion of the drafting of the Arab convention on the overland carriage of passengers between and across Arab States in order to encourage and facilitate Arab intraregional tourism.

The Arab leaders affirm the importance for Arab States to proceed without delay to ratify the Agreement on the Deregulation of Air Transport between Arab States in preparation for the final phase of the programme of opening Arab air space before November 2006, the date at which that phase is scheduled to begin. Arab States should also proceed without delay to ratify the Agreement on the Arab Collective Mechanism for Negotiation with Regional or Subregional Blocs in the Field of Air Transport as a means of protecting Arab interests.

Promotion of Arab intraregional tourism

The leaders endorse the steps that have been taken by some Arab States to encourage flows of tourists by creating joint entry visas and opening their airspace.

Arab electricity grid

The leaders have followed with interest the progress of the Arab electricity grid, and express their pride in that important integrative project. They ask the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Electricity to establish a mechanism, in cooperation with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, for helping the least developed Arab States complete their electricity grids in preparation for the interconnection of those grids with those of other Arab States.

World Summit on the Information Society

The Arab leaders appreciate the Arab coordination and preparatory work for the World Summit on the Information Society, and invite Arab States, Arab civil society institutions and the private sector to participate at the highest levels in the second phase of the Summit, which is to be held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005. They also invite the States of the world to participate in the Summit, focusing on practical and developmental aspects to close the digital gap.

The leaders affirm the importance of ensuring that the Agreement to Establish the Arab Information and Communication Technology Organization comes into force before the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society.

Sustainable development

The leaders appreciate the efforts of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment to give effect to the resolutions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 2002) through the implementation plan for the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region, and their efforts to coordinate with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Sustainable agricultural development and Arab food security

The leaders appreciate the efforts of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development in promoting sustainable agricultural development in Arab States. They entrust the AOAD and its General Assembly with responsibility for preparing an Arab sustainable agriculture development strategy for the coming two decades aimed at ensuring Arab food security and enhancing the competitiveness of Arab agricultural products in international markets.

Arab industrial development strategy

The leaders appreciate the efforts of the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization in preparing an Arab industrial development strategy. They affirm the importance of ensuring that the factors required for success in implementing the strategy are available, and the importance of bolstering the efforts of the Arab institutions concerned and Arab States in executing their programmes in the context of the strategy.

Investment

The leaders affirm the importance of pursuing efforts to improve the investment climate in the Arab region in order to attract more Arab and foreign investment, and invite the Arab private sector to take advantage of investment support mechanisms such as national and intraregional funding institutions, using the provisions of the Unified Agreement on the Movement of Arab Capital between Arab States as an appropriate framework for that purpose, while Arab funding institutions, for their part, should devote more attention to private sector funding.

Arab coordination mechanism concerned with natural disasters and emergencies

The Arab leaders affirm the importance of establishing a mechanism for coordination among Arab organizations working to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters and deal with their adverse effects, and coordination among Arab States in conducting relief and rescue operations in emergency situations. The leaders entrust the Economic and Social Council with responsibility for following up this issue.

Construction of an Arab earth observation satellite

The leaders welcome the proposal of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria concerning the construction of an Arab earth observation satellite and its willingness to prepare the studies required for that purpose in coordination with the competent agencies in Arab States and the Arab Ministerial Councils concerned.

Arab Strategy on the Family

The leaders affirm the importance of the role of the family in the life, cohesiveness and evolution of society. Wishing to see that role strengthened and enhanced, they express their support for the empowerment of the Arab family in the

interests of its stability and security and its ability to develop its functions along positive lines and deal with contemporary changes while maintaining its integrity, protecting its values and culture and the identity of its children and valuing knowledge and work. The leaders affirm that the Arab family should be provided with the legislative and socio-economic guarantees and basic services required to ensure its vitality and progress.

Convening of the eighteenth ordinary session of the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States in the Republic of the Sudan

Having regard to the provision of the annex to the Pact of the League of Arab States relating to the mechanism for the periodic convening of the Summit-level Council of the League, and taking into account the agreement between the Republic of Djibouti and the Republic of the Sudan to the effect that the Republic of the Sudan should assume the Presidency of the Summit-level Council at its eighteen ordinary session and that the Republic of Djibouti should do so at its twentieth ordinary session in 2008, the leaders welcome the proposal to hold the eighteenth ordinary session of the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States in the Republic of the Sudan in March 2006.

Algiers Declaration

We, the leaders of the Arab States, meeting as the seventeenth ordinary session of the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States in Algiers, capital of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, on 22 and 23 March 2005,

Wishing to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the League of Arab States, hail the achievements that have been realized in the framework of the League, and assert their adherence to the principles and provisions of the Pact of the League and their determination to continue to work to attain its objectives, expand its functions and strengthen its role,

Committing to the sublime human values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international legality,

Endeavouring to strengthen Arab solidarity and reinforce the bonds of nationality and fraternal ties linking all those who belong to the Arab nation and fostering unity of aim among its peoples,

Having regard to our Arab responsibilities as regards the forging of closer relations and stronger bonds between Arabs and laying down firmer foundations to support the exalted goals of the Arab nation and achieve the aspirations of its peoples, preserve their security and maintain their dignity and pride,

Affirming the centrality of the issue of Palestine and the necessity of restoring Arab rights and establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the region,

Do hereby declare:

That we regard Arab solidarity as a practical and effective means of maintaining Arab national security, ensuring respect for the integrity and sovereignty of every Arab State and its right to defend its resources, capacities and rights, and preventing interference in its internal affairs or the use of force or the threat of force;

That we shall pursue our efforts aimed at developing and modernizing the League of Arab States and activating its mechanisms in line with the rapid pace of global developments, and that we shall continue to strive to build an Arab society that is integrated in its resources and capacities, achieve comprehensive, sustainable development, and enable the League and all its institutions and agencies to develop their working methods and perform their functions more effectively, thereby responding to the needs of the Arab peoples and their aspiration to closer interlocking of their interests and enabling them to keep pace with the innovations occurring both within the Arab region and internationally;

That we are proud of the steps we have taken toward the reform of our Arab organization, including the establishment of an interim Arab parliament, the establishment of a monitoring body on the implementation of resolutions, amendments to the rules on decision-making and the voting system, action to enable civil society to participate in the activities of the League of Arab States and its institutions, approval of the Arab Strategy on the Family, a decision to construct an Arab scientific earth observation satellite designed to serve environmental purposes and track natural disasters, and pursuit of the process of gradually reforming the Joint Arab Action system and its working methods;

That we shall pursue the process of development and modernization in the Arab nation to strengthen the practice of democracy, broaden political participation, inculcate the values of citizenship and democratic culture, promote human rights, expand the sphere of civil society, and enable women to play a leading role in all areas of public life;

That we affirm our efforts to achieve Arab integration through activation of the Joint Arab Action system and the execution of joint projects in the economic sphere, including in particular the Greater Arab Free Trade Area and the development of partnership and investment, thereby strengthening Arab economies, stimulating trade, and enabling Arab States to address unsatisfactory aspects of existing international trading systems;

That we propose to launch initiatives, strategies and action plans aimed at achieving gender equality and heightening awareness of Arab and Islamic principles and values that guarantee women's rights and their role in society, and enact legislation designed to protect women, eliminate all forms of discrimination against them, and guarantee their participation in decision-making on a footing of equality with men in all social, political and economic activities;

That we reaffirm our commitment to a just, comprehensive peace in the Middle East region as a strategic choice for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, emphasizing in that connection the Arab peace initiative that was adopted at the Arab Summit held in Beirut in 2002, United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference based on the principle of land for peace, and the road map. We deem it essential to take advantage of the resulting revival of hope in the peace process and the accompanying opportunity of giving it fresh impetus with a view to reaching a just, comprehensive peace, which can be achieved only by means of Israel's complete withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories in Palestine, the occupied Syrian Golan and the Shab'a Farms to the line of 4 June 1967, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State having East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem in accordance with United Nations resolution 194 (1948). We reject all forms of Palestinian resettlement that are

incompatible with the principles of international law and the situation prevailing in the Arab host countries;

That we strongly affirm that the peace process is an integral whole, and that the just and comprehensive peace to which the peoples of the region aspire can be achieved only through the restitution of Arab rights, entire and undiminished, to those who are entitled to them;

That we proclaim our full and unqualified support for the Palestinian people in strengthening its national unity and the solidity of its internal front, and express our encouragement for the current efforts to promote a Palestinian national dialogue and our admiration for the Palestinian people's steadfastness in confronting the practices of the Israeli occupation authorities;

That we appreciate the role being played by the Al-Aqsa Fund and the Al-Quds Intifada Fund in supporting the Palestinian economy and providing assistance for various groups of the Palestinian people. We call for expansion of the resource base for those two Funds and invite the members of the Islamic Development Bank to join them. We consider that voluntary institutions should be offered the opportunity of funding programmes and projects that meet the Palestinian people's most urgent needs;

That we commend the atmosphere in which the Palestinian presidential elections took place, which reflected the democratic option, and that we affirm our continued support for the Palestinian National Authority and the strengthening of its role, and our unqualified solidarity with the Palestinian people for the restoration of its legitimate rights in the context of the unalterable principles that have been endorsed by successive Arab Summits;

That we express our unqualified solidarity with the fraternal Syrian Arab Republic as regards the so-called Syria Accountability Act, deeming that it oversteps the principles of international law and United Nations resolutions and affirming that the logic of dialogue and mutual understanding must have primacy for the resolution of differences between States;

That we reaffirm the territorial unity of Iraq and respect for its sovereignty and independence, and call for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1546 (2004), authorizing Iraq to recover its full sovereignty and terminate the foreign military presence in the country;

That we wish to see fraternal Arab-Iranian relations maintained, supported and developed, and call upon the Iranian Government to respond to the position of the United Arab Emirates in favour of the use of legal measures and peaceful means to recover its three islands;

That we welcome the signing of a peace agreement in the southern Sudan, affirm our solidarity with that country, and support the Government's efforts to deal with the situation in the Darfur region. We call upon all regional and international stakeholders to work for a peaceful solution to this issue without delay, one that will achieve the unity of the Sudan and maintain its sovereignty and integrity, with no exertion of foreign pressure;

That we commend the recent positive developments in Somalia, including in particular the election of a President of the Republic and the formation of a transitional federal Government, as an important step toward the country's recovery

of its unity, stability and security, and that we have approved immediate financial support for the Government of Somalia, through the Somali support fund, to enable it to meet its immediate needs;

That we affirm the national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Union of the Comoros;

That we strongly urge the necessity of reforming the international system in order to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and capability of the United Nations. We call for expansion of the permanent membership of the Security Council, and for action to enable the world's various groupings and cultures to participate in the management of the international organization, reflecting the principle of international partnership and promoting balance, justice and equality within it;

That we unreservedly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and denounce the crimes committed by terrorist groups, which constitute grave violations of fundamental human rights and represent a threat to the national safety and security of Arab States and jeopardize their stability. We call for the convening of an international conference under United Nations auspices to develop a definition of terrorism that will avoid any confusion of Islam with terrorism and clearly distinguish between terrorism and the legitimate right of peoples to resist occupation;

That we welcome the convening of the first summit between Arab States and the States of South America as a forum for cooperation, solidarity and constructive dialogue between these two groups of States;

That we propose to pursue our efforts to strengthen and promote Afro-Arab cooperation, including the convening of a meeting of the Ministerial Standing Commission in preparation for the second Summit Conference on Afro-Arab cooperation;

That we favour the renewal of Arab-European dialogue and closer liaison aimed at promoting relations between these two groups of States;

That we propose to strive for the building of bridges of cooperation and partnership between Arab States and States in other parts of the world;

That we appreciate the efforts of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to support the Joint Arab Action initiative, including in particular its offer to serve as the host country and its continuing support for the Higher Arab Institute for Translation, the project for a thesaurus of the Arabic language, the Arab Centre for Earthquakes and Natural Disasters, and the Arab Institute for Workers' Education and Research in the Field of work;

That we extend our sincere gratitude to Algeria, the land of struggle and liberation, and to His Excellency, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, and to the Algerian Government and people, for their generosity in hosting the seventeenth ordinary session of the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States, and express our high esteem for the care, concern and competence displayed by Algeria in preparing the summit, in consultation with the other Arab States and the Secretariat of the League of Arab States;

That we commend the outstanding achievement of His Excellency President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in presiding over the meetings of our Summit, and the sagacity and insight with which he has facilitated the work of the Summit and ensured its success. We affirm our full confidence in his enlightened leadership as President of the Arab Summit in the task of moving the Joint Arab Action initiative forward to further achievements and enabling it to regain the spirit of collective initiative that will strengthen solidarity and mutual support among the members of the Arab family and preserve their shared interests. In the same connection, we salute the efforts of Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, in promoting the Joint Arab Action initiative.

Algiers, 23 March 2005

Remarks by His Excellency, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, at the opening meeting

Your Majesties, Your Excellencies, Your Highnesses, Mr. Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour to receive you here today. I welcome you in the name of the Algerian people, and I thank you for accepting our invitation. I am confident that your participation in this Summit will enable us to respond to the aspirations of the Arab peoples and rise to the challenges confronting the entire Arab world.

Let me begin by extending to our brother, His Excellency President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, the praise due to him for the sagacity and dedication with which he has served as President for the past year. Thanks to his unfailing energy and keen insight, he succeeded in overcoming the problems that confronted him, steering our efforts and presenting an elevated image of the Arab world.

In addition, I should like to thank our distinguished Secretary-General, Mr. Amre Moussa, for his tireless efforts on behalf of our organization and all Arab issues. In particular, I should like to commend him and offer him my compliments for his noteworthy contribution to the work of preparing this Summit in clarifying and reconciling the positions of our several countries.

I must also invite you to join me in mourning two Arab leaders who have passed to God's mercy in the course of the past year. I refer to His Highness Sheikh Zayid Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, who had long refreshed us from the overflowing well of his wisdom and generosity in the critical times through which we have come, and our brother, the freedom fighter Yasir Arafat, President of the Palestinian National Authority, who dedicated his life to the service of his people's cause, and whom we all venerated for his courage, worthy of the great heroes of history, and his greatness as a leader. Another of our number who, alas, has been taken from us is President Rafiq al-Hariri. Our hearts are afflicted at his loss, but he has left behind the memory of a statesman distinguished for his outstanding competence and ability. May God extend his mercy and forgiveness to these great men, of whom the Arab nation can be justly proud and who strove always to exalt it and enhance its glory.

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that my friend, José Luis Zapatero, the Prime Minister of Spain, has very kindly responded to my invitation and is here with us today. His presence symbolizes the long-standing historical bonds between his country and the Arab world, and the special nature of the relationship that links us to this day.

In addition, I am pleased to extend my thanks to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for participating in this Summit. I should like to express our admiration for his courage and dedication in bearing the heavy responsibilities of his office. We are indebted to him for his understanding of and sympathy for our problems, and for the problems of the Third World in general, and we support his ongoing performance of his duty, appreciating as we do its importance and complexity.

We regard the presence of Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairman of the African Union Commission, and Mr. Ekmeluddine Insanoglu, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as a mark of the solidarity between the two regional groups that they represent and the Arab world. This fills our hearts with optimism.

Lastly, I must not overlook the presence among us of representatives of the European Union, Russia, France, Italy, Germany, Japan and Brazil in response to our invitation. This is evidence of the interest they take in the Arab world as it evolves.

While the Arab world has undeniably achieved some progress, it continues to lag behind as regards development, and it has not eliminated the obstacles arising from the wasteful application and fragmentation of the efforts of the Arab countries, and the various causes of division that keep us apart.

Assuredly, the influence that our Arab nation wields and the position it occupies in the international arena are not proportional, either in terms of economic power or in terms of social prosperity, to our wealth of natural and human resources. Our cultural, scientific and technical development is a far cry from our splendid cultural heritage. At a time when regional groupings are growing and increasing in vigour and strength, need we succumb to grief and regret over the weakness of our cooperation and inter-Arab integration, or is there any alternative?

This situation, undoubtedly, is basically the result of external factors which in the nature of the case have arisen partly from the after-effects of colonialist domination, and partly from the tragedy that has been imposed upon the Palestinian people and its repercussions, in the form of repeated aggression and expansionism, on neighbouring countries, with catastrophic results for their development and progress. Furthermore, the ambitions of outside interests and geostrategic rivalries have certainly been a contributing factor in the exacerbation of differences in the Arab geographic space, with the result that our resources have been squandered and our energies drained off.

However, this cannot and must not prevent us from recognizing, with full awareness and clarity of vision, our own shortcomings, errors and failures, as a first step toward adapting our policies and coordinating our action and our efforts more satisfactorily.

New threats have been added to these old challenges: as a result of globalization and the advent of new information technologies, we find ourselves confronted with increasingly pressing demands to take in a multitude of changes if we do not wish to be come marginalized, or our being to become tantamount to nothingness, or for us to be condemned to political dependence and our culture plundered or turned into a desert.

In the West, moreover, the events of 11 September 2001 have triggered an outburst of hostility in some quarters, which are using the pretext of terrorist atrocities committed by extremist groups to attempt to denigrate Islam and are seeking - and herein lies the danger - to concoct a "clash of civilizations" and fan it into flame.

It is our duty to resist those who hate Islam while avoiding the risk of being drawn into the logic of the so-called clash of civilizations, which serves the interests of extremists, all extremists. As far as we are concerned, it is of the utmost importance to act with determination to break with our unhelpful nostalgia for the glorious past and to strive instead to expedite economic and social modernization and institutional democratization. These are essential prerequisites to the evolution of our societies and their new aspirations. It is in our interest to forge closer links between us and the forces of peace and progress in the world, while yet not abandoning our personality and clinging more firmly than ever to those secular values that are compatible with our beliefs and constitute the best of our historic heritage.

This rapidly evolving international context confronts the Joint Arab Action system with the challenge of adapting its frameworks, rationalizing its methods and upgrading its performance. To hold the Arab Summit on a regular yearly basis, with the Member States hosting it in turn, would undoubtedly be an important step in the right direction. Reform of the Secretariat of the League and some of its institutions, such as the Economic and Social Council, and the proposed establishment of an Arab Parliament are measures that have come at an appropriate time and bring us closer to our goal. The same may be said of the orientations underlying the proposed amendments to the Pact of the League of Arab States.

As regards the important commitments made at the Tunis Summit with a view to making our countries more democratic and modernizing them, it is true that this is confirmation of our determination to respond to the requirements of broad popular participation in decision-making in political, economic and cultural life in our countries. This initiative is still greatly in need of renewed political visions and coordinated practical programmes structured around democratic consultation strategies, at a time when we cannot hasten the wheel of history, but must proceed slowly and gradually with our action programmes and institutions.

In the light of all this, we recognize that for any societies, and for our Arab societies in particular, there is still no alternative to reform. However, we must also recognize that we have shown the way in this respect, because we began to implement these reforms some years ago, and we have stepped up the pace as much as possible. These reforms have not been imposed upon us and will not be imposed upon us. We have applied them ourselves out of conviction, on our own initiative and under no compulsion, because we are aware of the advantages and benefits that will thereby accrue to our peoples. When we speak of differences in the situations of different countries, we mean simply that, realistically, we understand that every

country must make use of the approaches it deems most effective, most rational and most appropriate for implementing reforms, at a rate it deems satisfactory in terms of the requirements imposed by its particular political, cultural and social circumstances.

Let me be perfectly clear: we are determined to maintain our Arab being, which is something that cannot be split off from our identity, our civilization, and our common destiny.

We shall continue to cling stubbornly to our characteristics, which can neither be imposed on anyone else nor fused into cultures that are not ours.

The great issues of our age and the ways in which globalization operates present a serious threat to the objectives of our joint action, and will undoubtedly continue to do so so long as our societies have not evolved to meet these challenges and so long as our geostrategic and economic space has not assimilated basic elements of collective independence accompanied by the power to control the factors that affect our destiny.

From this standpoint, the issues of our collective security, true Arab reconciliation, the effort to develop various aspects of economic integration among our countries to the maximum possible extent through partnership and investment, and reaffirmation by Arab societies of secular values, which are inseparable from our basic heritage, all these issues, if not addressed, represent impediments to our nation as regards its ability to control its own future as an entity responsible for itself to the fullest extent, holding simultaneously to its origins and to modernism.

It is vital to the welfare of the Arab countries, as is apparent from the appalling consequences of the invasion of Kuwait and the continuing Israeli occupation of Arab territories, that international law should become the mainstay of our legitimate rights, even though some, by the use of force or by means of powerful alliances, may violate international law with impunity. At the same time, those countries, drawing upon their own resolve and their own resources, must find the keys to the task of bringing about individual and collective structural change, structural change that is so firmly rooted and far-reaching as to serve meaningfully as the basis of an authentic, comprehensive Arab renaissance. Such a renaissance is such an urgent matter and is so desperately needed that no obstacle or impediment of any kind must be allowed to stand in its way.

The renaissance of the Arab world is subject to two conditions if it is not to stumble, and those are, that the Palestinian people shall obtain its inalienable national rights in the form of an independent Palestinian State having Jerusalem as its capital, and that Syria and Lebanon shall recover all their occupied territories. Herein lies a challenge to civilization itself, inasmuch as nothing less than justice and peace are at stake.

In view of the Israeli authorities' persistence in their murderous ways and their consistent refusal to comply with the requirements of a comprehensive, just, lasting peace, such as the Arab world has strongly called for, it is incumbent upon us to support the Palestinian people and its leadership in their time of trial. At the same time, we must endeavour, with all persistence and lucidity, to make the international community and the world's conscience, and the Jewish people too, aware of the strategic nature of the Arab peace option. From this standpoint, over and above legitimate popular acts of resistance to foreign occupation and domination, and over

and above demands for appropriate international protection for civilians and infrastructure in the Palestinian territories, it is of the utmost importance to make it clear that the Israeli side alone bears responsibility for the escalation of violence and for the repeated delays in implementing the requirements of the peace process as defined in the "road map" and accepted, in theory, by all.

The peace initiative that was presented to us by Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz and was officially adopted at the Beirut Summit was based on the overall principle of land for peace: it called for Israel to withdraw completely from all the Palestinian Arab territories occupied since 4 June 1967 in return for complete peace. The road map, which has been praised by the international community, takes this Arab position into account and enshrines the idea that there shall be a Palestinian State and an Israeli State coexisting peacefully side by side. It is of the utmost importance that we here today should forcefully affirm the Arab world's strategic option of peace and support it by establishing a high-level political mechanism for implementation, communication, follow-up and evaluation purposes with a view to enhancing that option and giving it practical expression as soon as possible. In particular, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that the reference to a State of Palestine, which occurred for the first time in Security Council resolution 1397, is followed by the legal and political establishment of a recognized, permanent Palestinian State before the current year is out.

The Arab world is beginning to be aware of its weight and influence on the international scene, but that awareness must be accompanied by a sustained effort to take advantage of its strengths and address its weaknesses, in a framework of effective, multidimensional, multilateral Arab solidarity. Every credible renaissance project depends on this. We must work with reality.

Another prerequisite is the task of promoting and achieving reconciliation between fraternal Arab countries which are currently riven by disputes or even conflicts. Such reconciliation would overcome differences once and for all, including those that were psychological in origin. Its ultimate goal would be to build rationally based bilateral relations founded upon the ideals and principles that our peoples share, and those relations would be nourished by objective convergence toward sustainable shared interests.

In this context, the situation in Iraq must necessarily occupy our consciences and our minds. The appalling suffering and hardship that the fraternal Iraqi people are currently enduring arouses our deep distress and concern. The very nature of true Arab solidarity impels us here today to reaffirm our unequivocal, unambiguous support for the sovereignty and unity of the people and the soil of Iraq, and to state that the Arab world is prepared to stand by the side of the Iraqi people in all circumstances and in is efforts to recover its independence and territorial integrity.

This same duty of solidarity requires us to call for the lifting of all sanctions, whether multilateral or bilateral, imposed upon any fraternal Arab country, and for total respect for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Sudan, the Comoros Islands and Somalia.

In addition, the United Arab Emirates must recover, by peaceful means, its sovereignty over its three occupied islands. This will be a contributing factor in the essential easing of relations between the Arab world and its neighbours, in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding. We reaffirm this unshakable position in the hope

that the two sides will decide to take their dispute to the International Court of Justice, with a view to arriving at a final solution that will serve the interests of the Islamic community.

The effort to combat terrorism is prominent among our subjects of discussions today. Our countries, and Algeria in particular, have been among the first to suffer from the spread of this scourge. All the more reason, then, for us to condemn the confusion aimed at disparaging Islam in its essence and nature and labelling it an obscurantist enemy of progress and the West. We also condemn the perversion of the truth that arbitrarily and unjustly equates resistance to occupation and coercion with terrorism.

Our experience here in Algeria has been full of lessons and instructive examples. That tragedy was not simply the result of the hardship that Algerians have known; in point of fact, we, no less than others, have known times of great difficulty, when the failure of our social aspirations has led to grumbling and resentment. But while this may have been a factor, who is there today who can be unaware that the origins of the unprecedented violence that we have suffered lay also, indeed, primarily, in other crises and other tragedies in Afghanistan, the Middle East and other parts of the world?

The time will come when history will reveal its secrets, and then the Arab nation may fully recognize, through what has happened in Algeria, one of the hidden aspects of globalization: I refer to the violence, tensions and expansionism from which no borders, however well guarded, can shield even the best-organized country.

But Algeria today has recovered its stability, and the Algerian people are assiduously strengthening the foundations of their society and the pillars of their State, in political, economic, social and cultural terms alike.

We note with gratification that Algeria is receiving much attention today, diplomatically and, to an even greater extent, economically. Much of the credit for this is due to Arab institutions and Arab businessmen. However, I cannot conceal my disappointment at the fact that so many opportunities have been lost while so many avenues for Arab intraregional cooperation remain inadequately exploited, despite some noteworthy efforts in recent months.

We are encouraged by the hope that such cooperation may yet gain strength and expand, especially now that the will to rise to the challenge is there to an unprecedented degree, combined with the fact that now, more than at any time in the past, we have the financial means and the human resources required to advance toward the realization of the high ideals that have been cherished, generation after generation, by our fathers and grandfathers in every one of our countries.

But not only must our countries endeavour to strengthen intraregional Arab cooperation, they must also promote non-selective international cooperation in combating terrorism. They must fight with determination, each in its own national space, against whatever nourishes this scourge. At the same time, however, they must speak up in other spaces, notably in the West, on behalf of a determined effort to combat all forms of propaganda and publications that disseminate negative, distorted images of Arabs and Islam and propagate contempt, scorn and hatred of others.

In an age of large trading blocs, the Arab world is suffering from a considerable lag in its efforts to achieve economic integration, despite the fact that all the necessary elements are in place. It must define irrevocable interim objectives on the way to its achievement of this goal. It must also possess and control the new information and communication technologies and harness them to generate continuously rising standards of living for the Arab peoples.

International economic negotiations are another field in which it would be advantageous for our countries to have input, in order to express our objective solidarity with the countries of the South in their legitimate demands for fairer international trade management rules, effective action to deal with the problem of indebtedness, fairness in access to technology, expanded development funding and poverty mitigation mechanisms, and, finally, the democratization of international funding mechanisms.

In view of the historical links binding the Arab world and Africa, it would be desirable, from the standpoint of economic relations, to encourage and develop cooperation and partnerships with that continent, for cooperation and partnerships would assuredly be mutually beneficial. The African Union, a strategic entity of which we are a member, has approved the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a far-reaching programme that concerns the Arab world. As we look forward to celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Bandoeng Conference, we must all endeavour to fan the flame of Afro-Asian solidarity and seek to make it burn more brightly.

The natural resources that the Arab nation possesses, combined with its demographic weight and vitality, the great sweep of its geographic space and its location at the point where three continents meet, and its great cultural heritage, all of these are advantages and assets that it can use to make its voice heard in tomorrow's world, the world that is currently being built in an atmosphere of apprehension and with great difficulty.

Accordingly, we must overcome our differences and reinforce our natural solidarity with objective solidarity based on shared interests and projects, while trying to realize the conditions in which our societies will be able to find their way back to the road of social advancement and intellectual progress.

It is clear from all this that our Summit bears a very special responsibility. I am confident that we shall rise to the occasion by making the effort required of us.

The Arab world is an integral part of the international community, and as such is concerned by definition with the great discussions currently being devoted to the design of tomorrow's world. The Arab world must have its say in those discussions, in defence of its legitimate interests. One of those interests is its security, which can be guaranteed only by the establishment of a region free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and turning the Mediterranean Sea into a sea of peace and cooperation, in this year in which we are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process. There are other opportunities for us as well. One of these is Brazil's invitation to a Summit of Arab countries and Latin American countries, over and above the broad horizons that have opened up before us as a result of our cooperation with that great friendly country. In addition, we must understand that it is in our interest to strengthen dialogue with Europe, Africa and Asia as well as Latin America.

Lastly, we should encourage the liberation of the vital forces of our civil societies and create a cooperative Arab "citizenship" that would help make world public opinion aware of the ethical values and profound aspirations of our peoples.

We must not close our eyes to the fact that the Arab world must inevitably be an architect of change if it is not to lag behind and fail to meet the great expectations of our contemporary world. Nothing could be more harmful to us than to be held back by the obstacles in our path, or to settle for inactivity and withdrawal from action and striving. We shall be able to provide a future of happiness and dignity for our coming generations only if we rally round a single clear vision of an Arab world united in the determination to dedicate its capacities and resources to the task of serving human happiness and welfare everywhere within it, and even beyond its borders.

Thank you for your attention. Peace and the mercy and blessing of God be upon you all.

Remarks by Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, at the opening meeting

Mr. President, Your Majesties, Your Excellencies, Your Highnesses,

It gives me great pleasure, here in this important forum, to greet Algeria as it celebrates its holidays, to express my sincere congratulations and hopes for the presidency of the Arab Summit on this day when its year in office begins, and to greet you personally, Mr. President, known as you are for your high Arab spirit, your political activism, and your consummate diplomatic skills.

On this same occasion, I bid farewell to the Tunisian presidency, which guided Arabs' destiny at the past session and has guided it during the past year -has guided it skilfully and with a deep understanding of the Arab reality, including both its strengths and its weaknesses. I greet President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, and I wish all success and satisfaction to him and to Tunisia.

I also greet the Arab nation and its kings, Presidents and Emirs on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the League of Arab States, that venerable organization that has served the Arab world and brought its States and peoples together under one banner, and protected its identity from fragmentation and oblivion. Its failures, where it has failed, have not been more numerous than its successes, and in reality, in historical terms, it has shown itself capable of acting effectively to guide an Arab development movement and an Arab cultural renaissance, although it has been hampered by the obstacles that have been put in its path and the backward pull that has been exerted upon it.

As we take part in this important event, let us not forget the great leaders who have passed away in the course of the past year: Sheikh Zayid Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, with his nationalism and his eminent stature, Yasir Arafat, with his revolutionary ardour and his glorious struggle, and Rafiq al-Hariri, with all that he symbolized in terms of nationalism and his contribution to the rebuilding of his country.

A new age is dawning for the world, one that is bright in many respects: science and technology; literature, art and creativity; work, production and unprecedented wealth; freedom of thought and opinion and freedom to manage the

affairs of life; the role played by every individual, man or women, in determining the future of his or her community, with all working to create a paradise on earth and attempting to overtake imagination in order to turn it into reality. But this radiant new age has another side as well, one that is much more negative: we are witnessing the return of reaction and violent extremist fundamentalism, both in the east and in the west. There are extremist movements that proclaim a clash of civilizations and support military occupation, interference in the internal affairs of States, and action to change societies by various means, including force. There is terrorism that is afflicting many societies, and, in addition, poverty, ignorance and disease are spreading in many parts of the world. What is particularly distressing about all this is that while the new age has both a bright side and a dark side, as far as Arabs and their culture are concerned, it is the latter that generally prevails. Many are asking what the Arab contribution to world progress has been - in literature and the arts, in science and invention, in the elimination of epidemics - and are accusing Arabs of having contributed only to the production of terrorism and its mechanisms.

Even so, it is fair to say that the Arab world - the societies of which are generally characterized by moderation and balance and yearn to help the world advance toward a brighter future - has launched a number of initiatives and made strides ahead in the framework of development, modernization and reform.

For example, the Arab Summit in Tunis produced a vision of, in fact a plan for, modernization and development in the Arab world that placed the latter in its true context, whereas initiatives that have come to us from overseas may have spoken of reform programmes, but they have been flawed in their strategic vision, and their underlying premises bespeak motives relating primarily to security, not to the building of societies. In this connection, I have prepared a report on the progress of development and modernization in the Arab world and submitted it to this important conference.

Furthermore, consolidation of the process of modernization and the spread of its positive phenomena is not the only thing that has happened between the Tunis Summit and the Algiers Summit. The Greater Arab Free Trade Area, with its membership of 18 States, was launched on the first day of the current year. Even though GAFTA is still going ahead somewhat hesitantly, it has been launched, and it has become a reality that is presenting new opportunities. It is up to us to help it take its first steps, deal with its problems, and motivate our societies to take advantage of the facilities it affords in promoting Arab intraregional trade.

Supplementing this step, and concurrently with it, work has begun on the preparation of an Arab agreement on trade in services. The stage of bilateral negotiations among five Arab States has begun, and five other Arab States have indicated that they are interested in taking part in the coming round of negotiations, which are scheduled to resume next May. The general provisions of the agreement have now been completed, and the agreement may be concluded within a time frame ending not later than the end of the current year. The aim of the agreement is to liberalize a number of service sectors in a group of Arab States comprising perhaps ten countries.

I do not think I shall be exaggerating if I say that the launching of the Arab common market is not longer a mere dream, but rather has become an objective that can be realized. I suggest that the Summit should observe and monitor Arab Governments in their dealings with this single trading zone once there is no longer

any valid cause that we shall be able to blame for the low level of intraregional trade. At the same time, I hope that you will turn your attention to the challenge of beginning to work really seriously on the establishment of an Arab customs union. I myself shall endeavour to present the implementation programme for the establishment of such a union at the next Summit. The programme will contain the proposed time frames for making it fully operational by the end of a period of perhaps not more than ten years, that is, by 2015, with the launch of the Arab common market to follow. All these objectives are realizable; indeed, the movement of international trade and regional trading blocs makes it absolutely indispensable for the Arab world to take that route in its turn.

These steps that I am outlining here are components of a series of basic measures that the League of Arab States is endeavouring to initiate, coordinate and follow up pursuant to resolutions that you have previously adopted with a view to building a new regional economy that is Arab in texture, yet open to others, in a context the contours of which will become more clearly discernible as the data come in over the coming years, especially in the light of the free trade zones in the Mediterranean which are expected to be launched in 2010 and the Middle Eastern free trade area that the United States President, Mr. Bush, has spoken of, with a proposed target date of 2013. Varying numbers of Arab States will be invited to join these, and new bodies will have to be established to study and coordinate this new situation, its requirements, and its regional developmental and political repercussions.

In view of all this, we are now at the stage of formulating a draft Arab strategy for socio-economic development and economic integration, in accordance with the draft document adopted at our previous conference in Tunis. This will be implemented in coordination with the various Joint Arab Action institutions and under the direct supervision of the Secretariat of the League, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Arab Monetary Fund, and we shall endeavour to present it to the Economic and Social Council at the earliest possible date.

At the same time, in the social framework of the Arab development process, the Joint Arab Action initiative has begun to recover a measure of vitality. The Tunis Summit approved the updating of the Arab Charter on Human Rights and the Arab Anti-Poverty Strategy and proclaimed the Arab Decade for Persons with Special Needs; we at the present Summit will launch the Arab Strategy on the Family. I hope that this initiative will enable the Arab family to be stable and secure while preserving its culture and identity, and at the same time able to interact with the changes of the present age. In addition, the Algiers Summit will launch mechanisms aimed at enabling the Arab world to deal more effectively with disasters.

There are many examples from these and other fields in which we are working with diligence and sincerity, and if the League were able - or rather, if it were enabled - to do so, it would embark on a great positive initiative that would enable us to avoid many criticisms and shortfalls. With determination and combined action, we should be able to deal with and overcome them, and the Joint Arab Action initiative would assuredly become, as regards some of its aspects at any rate, an example to be imitated and a reliable reference.

By way of completing the work begun at the Tunis Summit in the area of development of the Joint Arab Action system, our present Summit will be

considering a number of important draft resolutions. One of these has to do with the establishment of an Arab Parliament, a second with the establishment of a monitoring body on the implementation of resolutions and commitments, and a third with changes to the League's decision-making mechanisms and voting procedures in its Councils. We shall complete this process within the current year under the Presidency of Algeria. We shall also be following up a number of other proposals and initiatives, including the establishment of an Arab Court of Justice, the establishment of an Arab Security and Peace Council, and various other ideas that have been proposed and agreed at various times.

But all this effort may vanish like the snows of yesteryear, because reform cannot be realized or become firmly rooted unless it stands solidly on two feet: active political will, and payment of the financial contributions that are essential to the implementation of resolutions designed to serve the collective Arab interest.

The Councils of the League have adopted numerous resolutions making provision for resources aimed at enabling the League to play its proper role and shoulder its responsibilities, but most of those resolutions have remained a dead letter. The League of Arab States continues to be in the grip of a crushing financial crisis as Member States' arrears accumulate, and many joint development programmes, especially in the course of the past two years, have had to be cancelled. This situation has affected various fields of joint Arab action, from children's welfare to the environment, from family programmes to programmes relating to intraregional trade and investment, and many more besides.

The financial crisis nearly swept away Arab participation as a guest of honour at the Frankfurt International Book Fair. Had it not been for the assistance of enthusiastic Arab efforts born of an awareness of our urgent need to participate, in the light of the challenges confronting Arab culture, we would not have participated. As it was, our participation was highly successful; indeed, it was a great achievement, a luminous moment in the cultural aspect of joint Arab action. Bridges were built, dialogue was pursued, Europe was able to interact with Arab culture and the Arab heritage, and the world realized that there is a truly brilliant side to Arabs. I thank Germany for its assistance and support, which enabled us to take part in the Fair in accordance with our original hopes.

I should like to extend my greetings to the Prime Minister of Spain, who is here with us today, bearing with him an initiative concerning the establishment of an intercultural alliance. We thank him for this, and we are looking forward to hearing what he has to say.

The new century has dawned with us in an unenviable defensive posture. To be sure, the cultural challenge is the gravest danger facing us, and calls for bold action by us as a society on a variety of fronts. Yet the political and security situation in the Arab world also requires us to be on our guard. Consider Iraq, its stability endangered, going through a phase that calls for the concern and support of all Arabs, while the Sudan, which has bandaged its wounds with the peace agreement between north and south, is expecting the League's support, along with that of the European Union, in putting an end to the problem of Darfur, and is seeking to rebuild the various parts of the country with the assistance of the League and its various Funds and working bodies. Somalia is hoping for assistance as well, and, indeed, deserves no less after having united its ranks to elect a Parliament and President and appoint a Government; and, lastly, we have Lebanon, to which our

hearts go out during the critical stage through which it is passing and which is looking forward to sincere, effective support from Arabs.

Palestine, for its part, is beguiled by a hope which I hope will not prove false. Israel is pursuing its colonialist settlement practices even as we meet here today, increasing the pressure in the hope of winning concessions while offering nothing in exchange, and imagining that rights will be forgotten, that the support and immunity that it enjoys will allow it to continue building settlements and the colonialist Wall and hold on to the occupied territories, or most of them, and that in the fact of all this, Arabs will simply give up and normalize relations with it for nothing, or nearly nothing, in return, as the Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs said the day before yesterday. But this must not be allowed to happen. There must be commitment in return for commitment. Only then will it be possible to reach a balanced peace, draw a line under the conflict and establish relations concurrently with a complete withdrawal and the establishment of a genuine Palestinian State.

Peace requires a framework. There is no alternative to a regional security system that will achieve balance, take the security of all into account, and ban the presence of weapons of mass destruction, most notably nuclear weapons, from all States, Israel not excepted. Otherwise, there will be no avoiding an arms race that will jeopardize regional stability and security in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. All this because of nuclear collusion with Israel, which makes nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation a two-faced policy that is ineffectual and unworthy of respect.

A new age and a different international system are on the point of emerging. We hear various developments and suggestions concerning United Nations reform and development of the Security Council, and the air is full of theories about humanitarian intervention, pre-emptive wars, the clash of civilizations and more besides. We must deal with all this; it is our responsibility to do so as members of the international community, and this Arab Summit will discuss, for the first time, one of the major components of this important complex of issues, namely, reform of the United Nations. The League of Arab States, as part of the international system, needs to develop its action if it is to be able to contribute meaningfully to the task of arriving at a clear-cut Arab position in this vital sphere.

Before concluding my remarks, I should like to direct your attention to a matter that is of the utmost importance for Arab policy: I refer to the need to embark, under your auspices, on the task of building bridges of dialogue - Afro-Arab dialogue, Arab-European dialogue, Arab-Asian dialogue. We must have two-way communication with these major blocs or groupings if we are to have effective Arab interaction with them after the present Summit is over and we are making our preparations in Marrakech for the Arab Summit with the South American States.

At this session, I have submitted for your consideration an account of Joint Arab Action activities during the past year. I have begun to carry out the tasks that you entrusted to me, and I shall pursue my efforts in that connection during the coming year (which is the final year of my mandate) with all the determination and energy at my command, right up to my last moment in office. I look forward to your support and assistance in setting the League of Arab States on the road to becoming an effective regional organization in terms of meeting the challenges confronting it, and confronting us all.

Peace and the mercy of God be upon you all.

List of the names of the heads of delegations of Arab States participating in the Summit

(Listed by country in Arabic alphabetical order)

His Excellency Mr. Faisal Al-Fayez, Prime Minister of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Muhammad al-Sharqi, Member of the High Council of the Union, Ruler of the Emirate of Fujayrah, United Arab Emirates

His Highness Sheikh Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and General of the Defence Force, Kingdom of Bahrain

Mr. Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia

His Excellency Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

His Excellency President Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti

His Royal Highness Saud Al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

His Excellency Omar Hasan Ahmad Al-Bashir, President of the Republic of the Sudan

His Excellency Dr. Bashar Al-Assad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic

His Excellency Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, President of the Republic of Somalia

His Excellency Ghazi Ajil Al-Yawer, President of the Republic of Iraq

His Highness Al-Sayyid Fahd Bin Mahmud Al Sa'id, Deputy Prime Minister for Cabinet Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman

Mahmoud Abbas, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, President of the Palestinian National Authority

His Highness Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar

His Excellency Souef Mohamed El-Amine, Minister of Foreign Relations and Cooperation, Union of the Comoros

His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Prime Minister, State of Kuwait

His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Hammoud, Minister of Foreign and Émigré Affairs, Lebanese Republic

His Excellency Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, Leader of the Great 1 September Revolution, Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak, President of the Egyptian Arab Republic

His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco

His Excellency Maouiya Ould Sidi Ahmad Al-Taya, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Major General Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, Deputy President of the Republic of Yemen